ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
New West End Entrance Station

National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior

FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE
TOWN OF ISLIP, SUFFOLK COUNTY, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

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the LA group
Landscape Architecture
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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Department of the Interior

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Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADA	**Americans with Disabilities Act**
AMSL	**Above Mean Sea Level**
BFE	**B Flood Elevation**
CWA	**Clean Water Act**
CFR	**Code of Federal Regulations**
CZMA	**Coastal Zone Management Act**
DOI	**Department of the Interior**
DOT	**Department of Transportation**
EA	**Environmental Assessment**
EO	**Executive Order**
ESA	**Endangered Species Act**
EFH	**Essential Fish Habitat**
FEMA	**Federal Emergency Management Agency**
FONSI	**Finding of No Significant Impact**
GMP	**General Management Plan**
GSA	**General Services Administration**
MOA	**Memorandum of Agreement**
NEPA	**National Environmental Policy Act**
NHP	**Natural Heritage Program**
NHPA	**National Historic Preservation Act of 1996, as amended**
NMFS	**National Marine Fisheries Service**
NOI	**Notice of Intent**
NPDES	**National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System**
NPS	**National Park Service**
NRHP	**National Register of Historic Places**
NYSDOS	**New York State Department of State**
NYSOPRHP	**New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation**
PARK	**Fire Island National Seashore**
REG-NEG	**Negotiated Rulemaking or Regulatory Negotiation**
RMSP	**Robert Moses State Park**
ROD	**Record of Decision**
SEQRA	**State Environmental Quality Review Act**
SSER	**South Shore Estuary Reserve**
SOF	**Statement of Findings**
USACOE	**United States Army Corps of Engineers**
USDA	**United States Department of Agriculture**
USDI	**United States Department of the Interior**
USEPA	**United States Environmental Protection Agency**
USFWS	**United States Fish and Wildlife Service**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) identifies, describes and analyzes a proposed new entry station for the western entrance (Project) to the Fire Island National Seashore (Park). The Project is comprised of a single new National Park Service (NPS) visitors contact station and new keypad entry gate system on property currently owned by New York State adjacent to the Park. The lands where the proposed Project Site is located between the Park Lighthouse Tract and Parking Field 5 of Robert Moses State Park (RMSP) at the eastern loop of the Robert Moses Causeway.

The project will consist of a new building not to exceed 2,000 square feet that will provide needed office space for Park personnel, an information contact station for Park visitors, and public restrooms. A total of eight (8) parking spaces will be available at the site. Four will be reserved for staff use and four for public use, including one wheelchair accessible. The building's public purpose is envisioned as an incidental use for people to purchase or check on driving permits. Public restroom use is targeted for pedestrians traveling to and from the Park beaches. Pedestrian connections will be incorporated to existing walkways from the beach and from RMSP Parking Field 5 (parking area). Residents and visitors accessing the Park year-round utilize Parking Field 5.

Three alternatives were considered for the placement of the new visitor contact station and entry gate. The selected alternative best balances the protection of natural resources, historic viewsheds, and site lines of the existing raptor-viewing platform with the need for improved public visibility, additional physical space, secure, safe vehicle access to Park lands, safe efficient ingress/egress from RMSP to the Park, and retention of good vehicle circulation for vehicles leaving RMSP.

Park staff is committed to this project for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, a new entry gate will relieve a long-standing problem of unauthorized public vehicular access at the western entrance. Secondly, moving the gateway west from its current location approximately one-half mile east to the western end of the Park will better identify the Park itself, provide additional needed restroom facilities, and make the entry itself safer for vehicles and pedestrians. Third, it will provide needed space for administration offices and interpretive uses.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the National Park Service (NPS) and other federal agencies to conduct a formal environmental review process on proposed projects prior to decisions on their implementation. This process is designed to disclose and analyze the purposes and needs for a project, the potential alternatives to and impacts from the project, and provide for public involvement. The benefits of this process are greater public understanding of proposed projects, combined with better implementation decisions. The process helps identify less damaging alternatives and methods that may be integrated into the decision to avoid, reduce, or mitigate adverse impacts. Public involvement included presentations and negotiations with RMSP, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) and the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society. Full public review of the EA will be made

available in accordance with the regulations contained in NPS's Director's Order #12, "Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making."

This Statement of Findings (SOF) document has been prepared in compliance with NPS wetland protection and floodplain management procedures. This document can be found in Appendix B.

The EA process is occurring concurrently with a separate Negotiated Rulemaking Process. Negotiated Rulemaking or "Reg-Neg" (regulatory negotiation) is a consensus-building process that brings together representatives of a rulemaking agency and stakeholders to design a set of rules that incorporate the concerns of the stakeholders during the process rather than at the end of the process. In 1998, The National Park Service (NPS) convened a citizen advisory group to help it develop new regulations for off-road driving within the park. This negotiated rule-making process reached consensus on a number of aspects of off-road vehicle use and the park is currently developing a proposed rule which would incorporate these as amendments to the regulations presently codified in Title 36 CFR Part 7.20, the special regulations that apply to Fire Island National Seashore (FINS). The regulations utilized by Fire Island National Seashore [contained in Parts 1 through 7 of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)] are the basic mechanisms used by the National Park Service (NPS) to protect the natural and cultural resources of the parks and to protect visitors and property within the parks.

Consistent with the framework developed by the negotiated rule-making group, the new regulations are intended to reduce the amount of driving; mitigate impact to park resources; offer uniform regulations adopted by all jurisdictions; share more enforcement responsibilities with Suffolk County Police Marine Bureau; place federal enforcement primarily at the checkpoints; and continue to manage the Burma Road as an off-road driving route. The negotiated rulemaking group found that the existing regulations are confusing; conflict with other regulations contained within Title 36 CFR 7.20; and also conflict with regulations of other jurisdictions within park boundaries. The existing west end entrance to the park is a vital component of the park's driving monitoring program. The Reg-Neg effort will result in revisions to the existing Off-Road Vehicle Regulations, which may result in the West End Entrance Gate receiving more traffic.

Independent of the Reg-Neg, the need for the new entry still exists. The Reg-Neg process builds consensus around the conceptual issue of the access management to the beach area. The new entrance building and gate facility implement the necessary control of access in accordance with any future plan. Should the Reg-Neg process result in more stringent access requirements, it will become an even more important factor.

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

2.1 Need For Action

The proposed New West End Entrance Station by Fire Island National Seashore (Park) represents an important access point to natural and cultural resources of national significance to the 17 small communities on the island and for certain permitted vehicle users. The Park currently attracts over 4 million recreational visits per year. The majority of these visitors travel to Fire Island via ferry or park in Parking Field 5 at RMSP.

Fire Island National Seashore was established in 1964. The 1978 Fire Island National Seashore General Management Plan, management objectives include preserving and protecting the historic resources of the Lighthouse Tract; managing the natural resources within the Lighthouse Tract and the adjacent bay islands for interpretation, environmental education, research and preservation; and rehabilitation and preservation of bay-to-ocean strips. The Project will seek to meet these objectives while meeting the changing needs relating to providing safe public access to Park resources.

There are a number of existing problems and issues that will be addressed and resolved by the proposed Project:

- The need to provide a vehicle checkpoint station which safely controls access to Park lands. The most significant safety problem is the lack of a safe turn-around area. Curiosity seekers drive approximately one-half mile down to the existing checkpoint and then must back up to return to the road back to RMSP. Also, the permit entry system is outdated and inefficient.

- The need to protect natural resources from illegal off-road driving.

- The need for additional office space and parking for Park staff.

- The need to provide a safe drop-off point for pedestrians.

- The need to provide additional restroom facilities.

- The need to provide an improved initial point of information and contact for visitors and residents.

- The need to show a physical and visual boundary of where the Park begins.

- Work cooperatively with Robert Moses State Park and the Friends of Fire Island Lighthouse in managing the boundary area of the West End.

2.2 Objectives of the Action

The Project's objectives include the following:

- Provide a new controlled entrance to the Park. The entrance should clearly mark the presence of the Park and the limited point of entry to public and private lands in the Park. Provide a poster-sized map at the entry gate locating public lands and the private communities in the Park.
- Upgrade the existing gated entry system to provide a modern efficient electronic gate system.
- Provide a new entrance that allows for a safe turn-around or exit area for vehicles that do not have a permit.
- Provide a safe drop-off point for pedestrians.
- Provide additional building space to accommodate Park staff.
- Provide additional public restroom facilities.
- Provide an additional area for limited interpretive programs and for the driving permit education program.
- Provide limited parking spaces at the entrance for the incidental use of the public for purposes such as picking up permits.
- Provide for cooperative management with the various communities and partners in the Seashore

2.3 Objectives Described in Legislation

The Project's objectives stated in Section 2.2 are consistent with the aims stated in the NPS's Fire Island Mission Statement, as follows:

"The National Park Service is committed to preserving Fire Island National Seashore's cultural and natural resources, it's values of maritime and American history, barrier island dynamics and ecology, biodiversity, museum collection objects and wilderness. The National Park Service is committed to providing access and recreational and educational opportunities to Fire Island National Seashore visitors in this natural and cultural setting close to densely populated urban and suburban areas, and to maintaining and exemplifying the policies of the National Park Service."

2.4 Project Location

The New West End Entrance Station is located in the Town of Islip on Fire Island just off the south shore of Long Island. As indicated in Figure 2-1, "Regional Location Map," the site is specifically located on the Fire Island Lighthouse Tract portion of the Fire Island National Seashore lands, adjacent to and just east of the Robert Moses State Park. The present West End Entrance Station is the primary entry point to both public and private lands in the Park and is located approximately one-quarter mile east of the proposed location.

Figure 2-1 Regional Location Map

The Project Site is approximately 50 miles east of New York City. It is accessed by car via Montauk Highway, Sunrise Highway and the Long Island Expressway. The Sagtikos State Parkway leads into the Robert Moses Causeway, which terminates on Fire Island. The site is also linked to New York City via the Long Island Railroad. Figure 2-2, "Fire Island National Seashore Lands," illustrates the patchwork of Park lands among other private, county and state lands. The Park is flanked by RMSP on the west, and Smith Point County Park on the east. Private lands include the seventeen small hamlet communities interspersed throughout the length of the Park.

Figure 2-2 Fire Island National Seashore Lands

Ferry transportation and private boats provides access to the interior areas of Fire Island National Seashore. Ferries generally run from May through October. The Fire Island Ferry Terminal at Bay Shore runs to Kismet, Saltaire, Fair Harbor, Dunewood, Atlantique, Ocean Beach, Seaview and Ocean Bay Park. The Sailors Haven Ferry Terminal at Sayville runs to Sailors Haven, Cherry Grove and Fire Island Pines. The Watch Hill Ferry Terminal in Patchogue runs to Watch Hill and Davis Park. Burma Road is the only access for vehicles entering the Park from the west.

Figure 2-3, "Project Location Map," illustrates the Project's location as it relates to the Park boundary with Parking Field 5 of Robert Moses State Park.

Figure 2-3 Project Location Map

2.5 Current Land Holdings

The west boundary of Fire Island National Seashore was established by Public Law 95-625 [Nov. 10, 1978, 92 Stat. 3488; see 16 U.S.C. § 459e(b)]. The United States of America owns the land immediately east of the boundary. New York State owns the land to the west.

Federally owned Tract No. 17-01 (± 81.4 acres) is a ¼-mile-wide strip of land adjacent to the boundary that extends from the Atlantic Ocean to Great South Bay. Tract No. 17-03 (± 37.2 acres) is further east and includes the historic Fire Island Lighthouse and the current westernmost ranger station in the Seashore. The ranger station is approximately ½ mile east of the boundary along the Burma Road.

The federal land between the boundary and the ranger station is unimproved except for the Lighthouse, the unpaved Burma Road and a pedestrian boardwalk. This area consists primarily of wetlands and dunes. Thousands of people visit the Lighthouse and public beaches along the Atlantic Ocean in this area every year. The Burma Road is open to pedestrians, but vehicle use is restricted to permit holders traveling to private properties east of Tract No. 17-03.

The State property west of the boundary is part of the main unit of Robert Moses State Park administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. This area includes the eastern terminus of the Robert Moses Causeway (a paved divided four-lane road), Parking Field 5 for the State Park, a raptor observation platform, and an extension of the pedestrian boardwalk that crosses federal land. The Causeway was constructed on fill and is higher than surrounding areas. The Burma Road begins at the Causeway turnaround and descends the filled area to the boundary. The area between the Causeway turnaround and the boundary has been previously disturbed and is currently planted with grass and some shrubs. This area is easily visible to approaching vehicles and could be accessible from the Causeway without use of the Burma Road.

As proposed, the West End Entrance Station will be located west of the original boundary of the Park. The Project Site is located on the Entrance Triangle (see Figure 2-3), part of a tract of land that belongs to the State of New York and is part of RMSP. The Park has received a letter of intent from the State of New York stating that the land will be donated via an easement to the NPS. This process will be fully executed once the Environmental assessment is complete and a Preferred Action is chosen. The Park has also received permission from the State to adjust the boundary of the National Seashore around the easement (as seen in Figure 2-4). Although NPS land acquisition authority is limited to real property within the Seashore boundaries [see 16 U.S.C. § 459e-1], boundary revisions to accept donations of State Land adjacent to the Seashore are authorized by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act [see 16 U.S.C. § 460*l*-9(c)(1)(ii)].

Figure 2-4, "Proposed Boundary Revision Map," illustrates how the Fire Island National Seashore boundary would shift west of its present location.

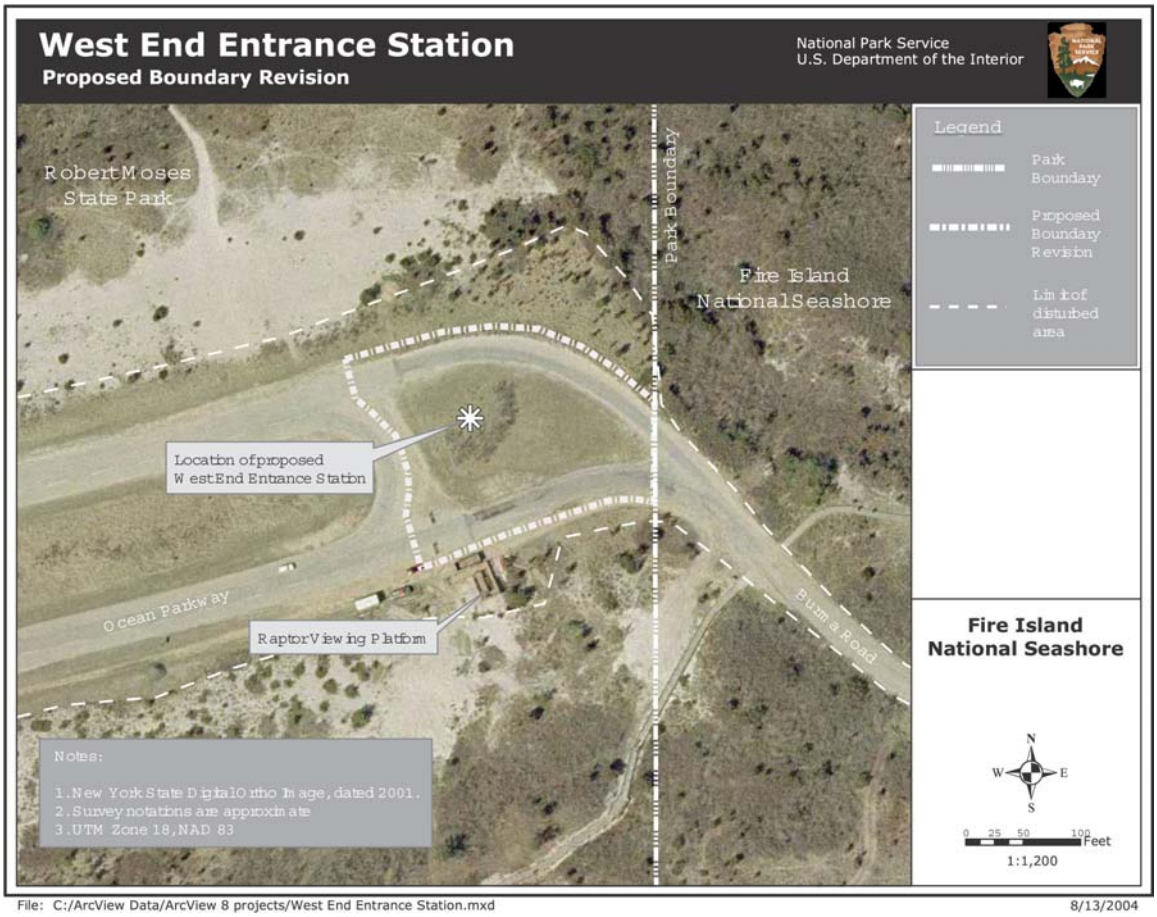

Figure 2-4 Proposed Boundary Revision Map

2.6 Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve

FINS is located within the South Shore Estuary Reserve (SSER). It is important that actions proposed within the Park are consistent with Comprehensive Management Plan prepared for SSER.

Estuaries are coastal areas where fresh water mixes with salt water. The South Shore Estuary was formed by glacial deposits that shaped the barrier islands to enclose 173 square miles of bays characterized by tidal marshes, mud and sand flats, beds of underwater vegetation and extensive shallows ranging from 1 to 7 meters deep. This environment supports numerous valued natural and cultural resources which provide significant social and economic benefits to the Long Island community. Local concerns

about environmental conditions of the South Shore generated the development of a Comprehensive Management Plan. The Comprehensive Management Plan, completed in 2001, identifies a number of objectives that are complementary to NPS policies regarding this proposed project. The objectives outlined in the plan are:

- Protect and restore living resources of the Reserve;
- Expand public use and enjoyment of the estuary;
- Increase education, outreach and stewardship.

The Comprehensive Management Plan proposes to achieve the above objectives by implementing the following actions:

- Expanding public access and recreation facilities at existing sites;
- Creating new or enhanced public access and recreation opportunities;
- Provide adequate infrastructure to support existing and new water-dependent uses;
- Improving local waterfront regulation;
- Facilitating public/private partnerships to support water-dependent businesses.

2.7 Impact Topics

Impact topics represent the various natural, cultural and physical resources, which may be affected in some capacity by the Project. Relevant impact topics include: sand dunes; wetlands; endangered or threatened plant and animal species; historic properties and structures, cultural resources, visitor experience, and visitor safety.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES

3.1 Introduction

Fire Island National Seashore is currently managed under its General Management Plan (GMP) approved in 1978, its Organic Act, and various laws and policies of the U.S. National Park Services. The GMP outlines an environmentally sound management basis for the national seashore to ensure the protection and perpetuation of the beaches, dunes, and other natural features. It is also designed to provide reasonable access and facilities for public day-use recreation and continued relationships with the communities. Park plans for improvements must complement the complex set of private and public land use pattern that make up Park lands. They must also be consistent with the GMP and other laws, policies and regulations for units within the National Park System.

3.2 Alternatives Considered But Rejected

Alternative sites on federal land were considered but rejected. These sites included placing the entrance at various locations between the existing location and the Entrance Triangle. These sites ultimately did not meet the criteria for an improved point of access. The purposes of the project require placing the proposed entrance station at or near the Park boundary. Placing the entrance station on park lands along the park boundary would require substantial impacts to undisturbed areas of high value, including wetlands and dunes. The only sites near the park boundary that would avoid these undisturbed areas are on state land. In addition, the state land sites afforded greater visibility and ease of turn-around traffic without leaving the Causeway.

3.3 Alternative A – No Action Alternative

The "no action" alternative assumes that the present gate facility remains at its existing location. The location of the existing facility was shown previously on Figure 2-3, and Figure 3-1 below, is a photograph of the existing gate facility. No change in the gate entry system means that the present problems with traffic and gate operation will continue and accelerate with anticipated increases in traffic levels in and around the site due to annual increases in visitor levels. The existing gate entry system cannot safely accommodate new levels of traffic nor ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists along Burma Road.

Figure 3-1 Existing Entry Station – View Looking East

Figure 3-2 Existing Entry Station – View Looking West

The Figure 3-2 shows a western view of the existing West End Entrance Station and gate entry. It illustrates that any effort to expand this site in order to accommodate a turn-around or some other improvement will result in the loss of substantial vegetation, possibly more disturbance of historically significant land, and negatively impact the visual landscape of this area.

Figure 3-3, "Alternative A – No Action Alternative", represents existing environmental conditions of the site selected for the New West End Entrance Station.

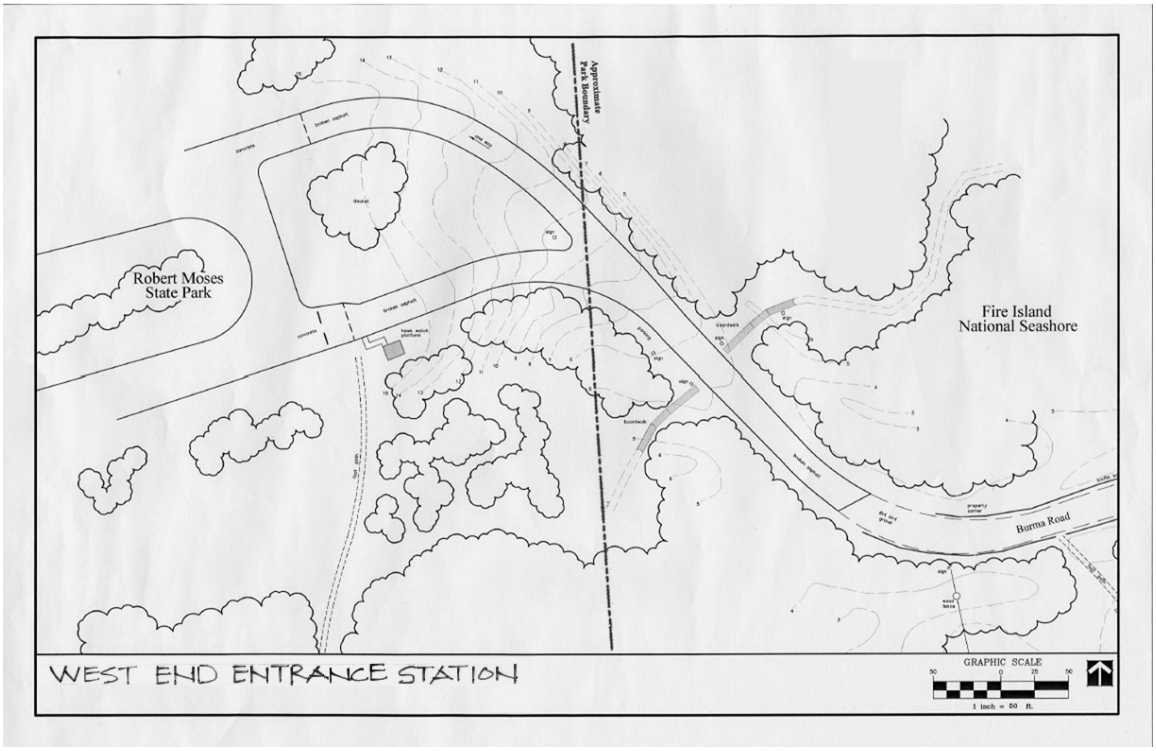

Figure 3-3, "Alternative A – No Action Alternative

3.4 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Alternative B is shown on Figure 3-4, "Alternative B Concept Plan - Preferred Alternative." Alternative B represents the Project's best-suited site based upon safe and efficient vehicle access, the public need for additional restrooms, and connections to existing pedestrian trails. This alternative will have the least impact on environmental resources.

Figure 3-4 identifies the location for a building, approximately 1,000 square feet, to be constructed at the northwestern corner of the Entrance Triangle. The building is not intended as a "visitor center", therefore, parking is limited to eight spaces for staff and

incidental transients applying for or obtaining a transportation permit. To provide a safe drop-off zone for pedestrians on their way to Park beaches and private residences on Fire Island, an additional parking area will be made available outside the new parking lot. The parking lot and drop-off area will be accessed by the existing entry road and loop back out onto the existing exit road. The remaining section of the entry road leading into Burma Road will be closed to traffic making it safer for pedestrians walking to the various pathways. Walkway connections will be provided from the new building to existing footpaths leading to the Parking Field 5 and to the Fire Island Lighthouse.

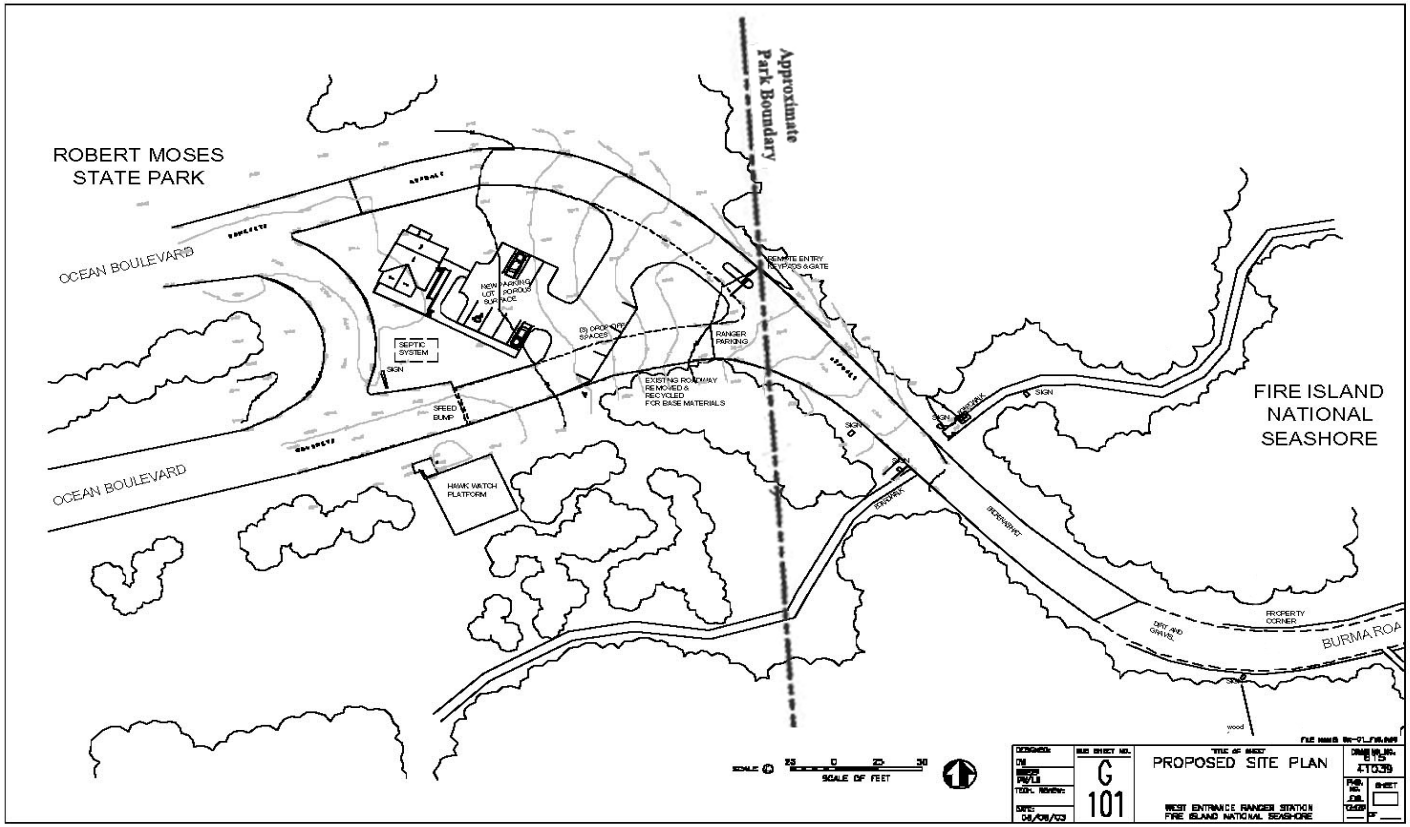

Figure 3-4 Alternative B Concept Plan– Preferred Alternative

A new electronic two-way keypad entry/exit gate will be installed near where the entrance road from and exit roads out of Robert Moses Causeway meet. Utilities including power and water will be provided from sources at the present Park checkpoint (the Annex) just east of the Fire Island Lighthouse. Pipes and wires, sized appropriately to service the Project, will be buried along Burma Road at the same time Burma Road is resurfaced with crushed shells (in the planning process). Water pressure and volume will be provided by an artesian well near the Annex. This potable water source is more than adequate to service the site. New public restrooms will be provided with entrances from the outside to allow for comfortable public access.

The existing office building adjacent to the existing entry gate will remain and continue to be utilized as office space for Park staff. The existing entry gate will be dismantled.

The Preferred Alternative will result in the following positive impacts for the public and for the Park:

- Placement of the new building at the northwest corner of Entrance Triangle will preserve views of the Fire Island Lighthouse.
- Shortening the existing separated entry and exit roads and connecting them to one another will improve vehicle safety while reducing the overall pavement area.
- A consolidated entry/exit gate with a remote entry keypad and information device provides improved access and efficient NPS staff monitoring.
- Placement of the New West End Entrance Station building and improved area signage will strengthen the point of arrival to the Park.
- Appropriate parking for the visitor and NPS staff, including wheel chair accessible parking, will be provided.
- A safe drop-off area for pedestrians will be provided.
- Additional restrooms will meet the needs of pedestrians coming to and from Parking Field 5 into the Park eliminating an under capacity of restroom facilities.
- Pedestrian connections to existing paths and boardwalks are provided making the area safer and more attractive.
- Incorporating native plant materials into the design of the New West End Entrance Station will help meld the building into the site.
- Placement of the new building preserves the viewshed from the raptor-viewing platform as well as the general flight patterns of hawks in this area.
- Placement of the building allows for a gravity flow sewer to a new leach field.
- Park staff contact and availability.
- Additional office space for Field Rangers.

Dry sandy soils in the Entrance Triangle will support an on-site septic tank and leach field to service the site's restroom facility. Design of the system will be in accordance with the Suffolk County Public Health rules and regulations. On-site capacity will be determined by soil and percolation tests. The number of bathrooms to be built is limited by the size of the land available in the Entrance Triangle. Preliminary investigations of the site indicate that the site could support up to 4 toilets and 2 lavatories.

Figure 3-5 shows the physical aspects of what is known as the Entrance Triangle, the site for Alternatives B, C and D. This photograph illustrates the existing Burma Road exit connection to the loop at the eastern end of Robert Moses Causeway.

Figure 3-5 Entrance Triangle – View Looking West

3.5 Alternative C

Alternative C conceptualizes the building in the northeastern corner of the Entrance Triangle. Parking for four vehicles is provided on the east side of the building. The existing entry roadway into Burma Road is completely closed in this alternative, leaving an open pedestrian corridor. New walkway connections are provided from the new building to existing paths. The exit road out of Burma Road and onto the Robert Moses Causeway will become a two-way road. A new electronic two-way keypad entry/exit gate will be placed approximately halfway up this section of road. Figure 3-6, "Alternative C Concept Plan," depicts the layout of this alternative.

Alternative C did not fully meet the project objectives. This alternative did not address the concerns of RMSP management that there be a safe drop-off zone for pedestrians on their way to the beaches and private residences inside the Park.

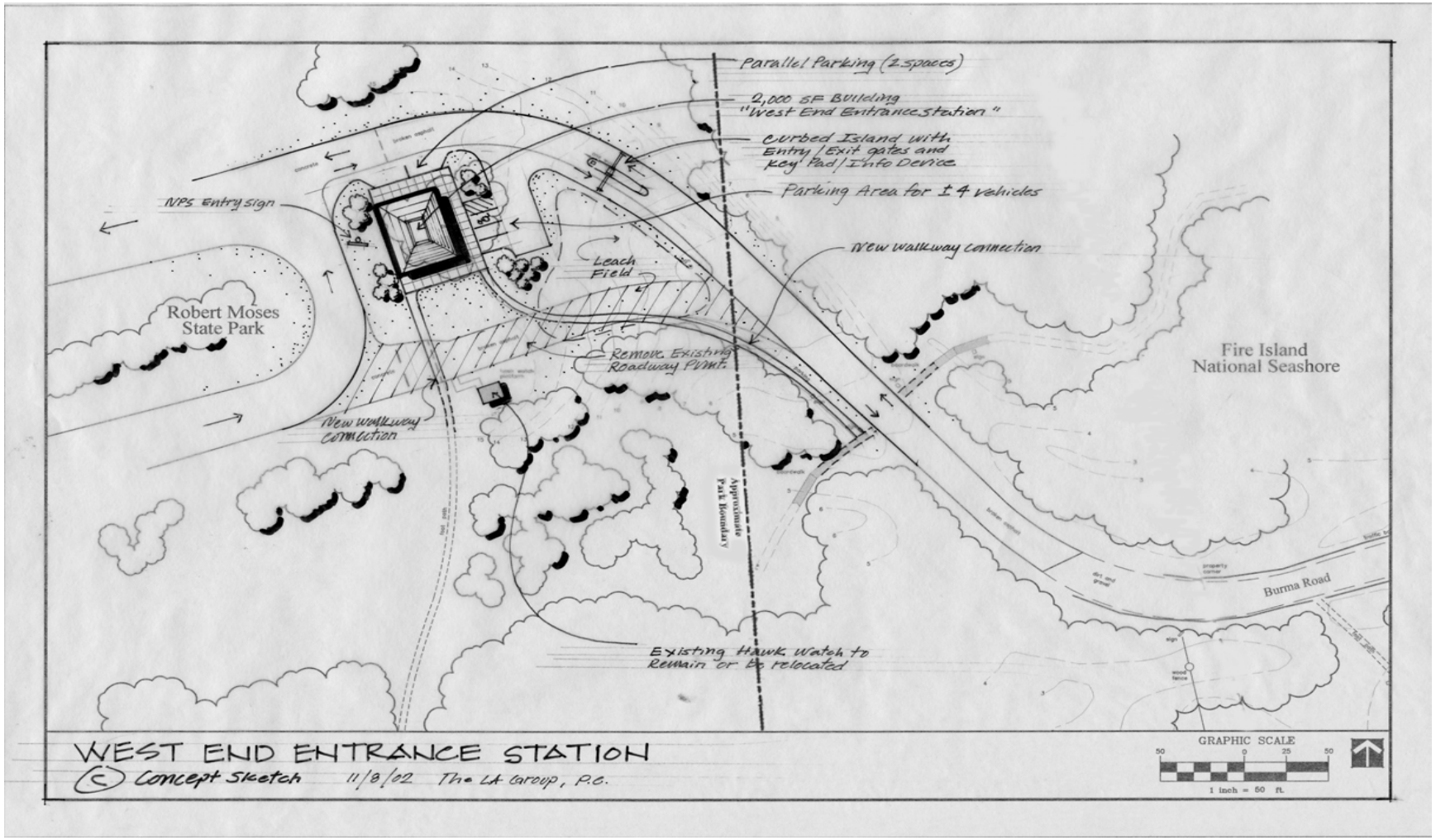

Figure 3-6 Alternative C Concept Plan

3.6 Alternative D

Figure 3-7 is a photograph of the location for Alternative D. The layout plan of Alternative D is depicted in Figure 3-8. This alternative places the building inside the Entrance Triangle at its most southeastern end, closing off the present entry to Burma Road making it a two-way road at the beginning of the westerly portion of Robert Moses Causeway running in an easterly direction into Burma Road. This creates an efficient and safe pedestrian flow and disturbs no vegetated lands. A new entry road to the building creates indirect access for cars, lessening the chance of parking for unintended vehicles.

Figure 3-7 Site for Alternative D – View Looking East

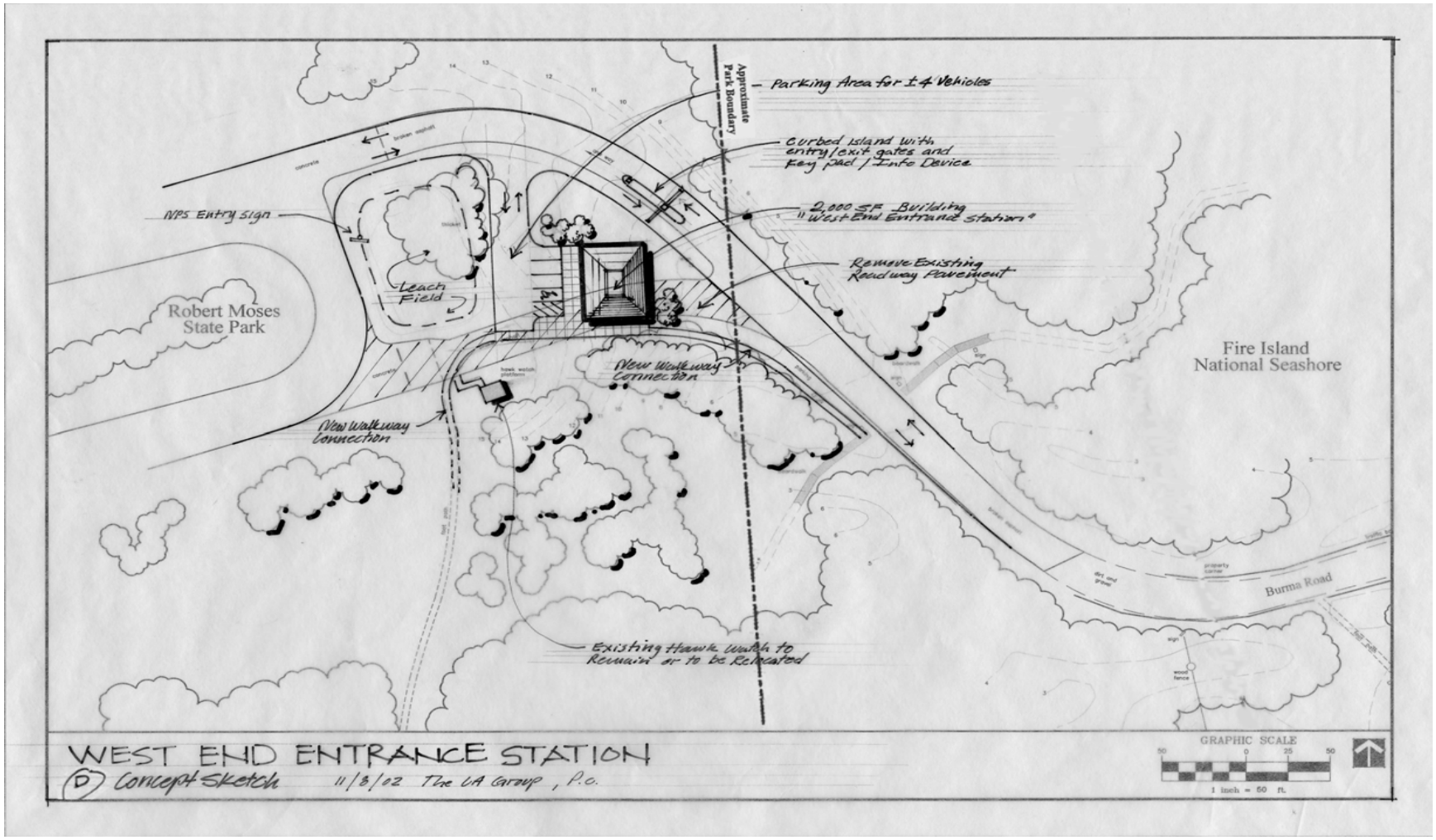

Figure 3-8 Alternative D Concept Plan

As with Alternative C, this alternative (D) did not fully meet project objectives. There is no designated drop-off zone for pedestrians in the layout. Another potentially significant factor is the building's relationship to the raptor-viewing platform. Alternative D places the building in the primary line of site of bird watchers at the raptor-viewing platform. Another important factor is the fact that sanitary waste would have to be pumped to the uppermost area of the Entrance Triangle. In addition, the building may be visually intrusive to the historic Fire Island Lighthouse. Virtually every car exiting RMSP and all persons entering the Park's from the west enjoy this public viewshed, therefore, it is critically important that this viewshed be preserved.

Figure 3-9, "Visual Impact of Alternatives B, C and D, photographically indicates the locations of Alternatives B, C, and D in relationship to the Fire Island Lighthouse, an important historic and visual landmark for visitors.

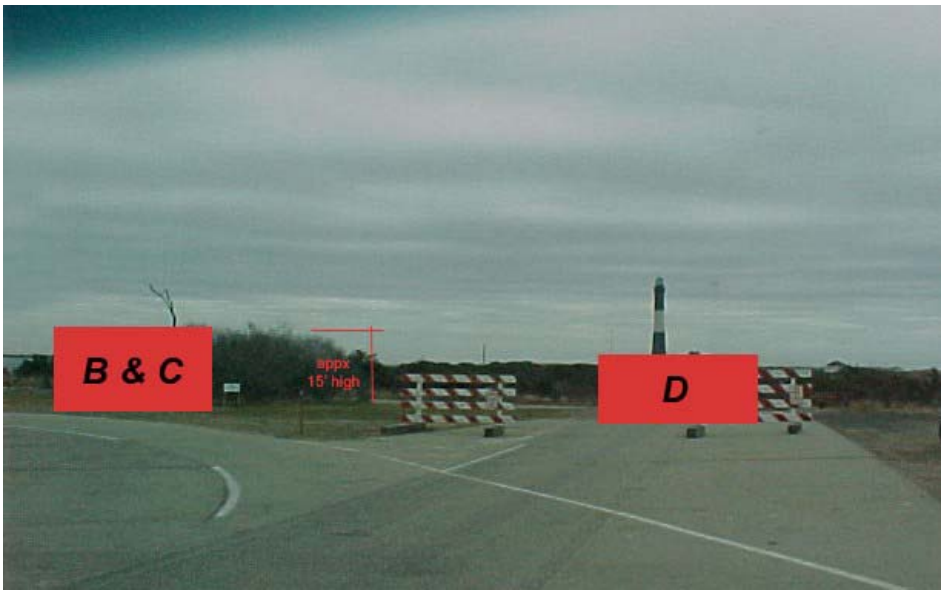

Figure 3-9 Visual Impact of Alternatives B, C, and D

The design of the Entrance Station will be reminiscent of the historic life saving station. Figure 3-10 depicts the general architectural style of the new building.

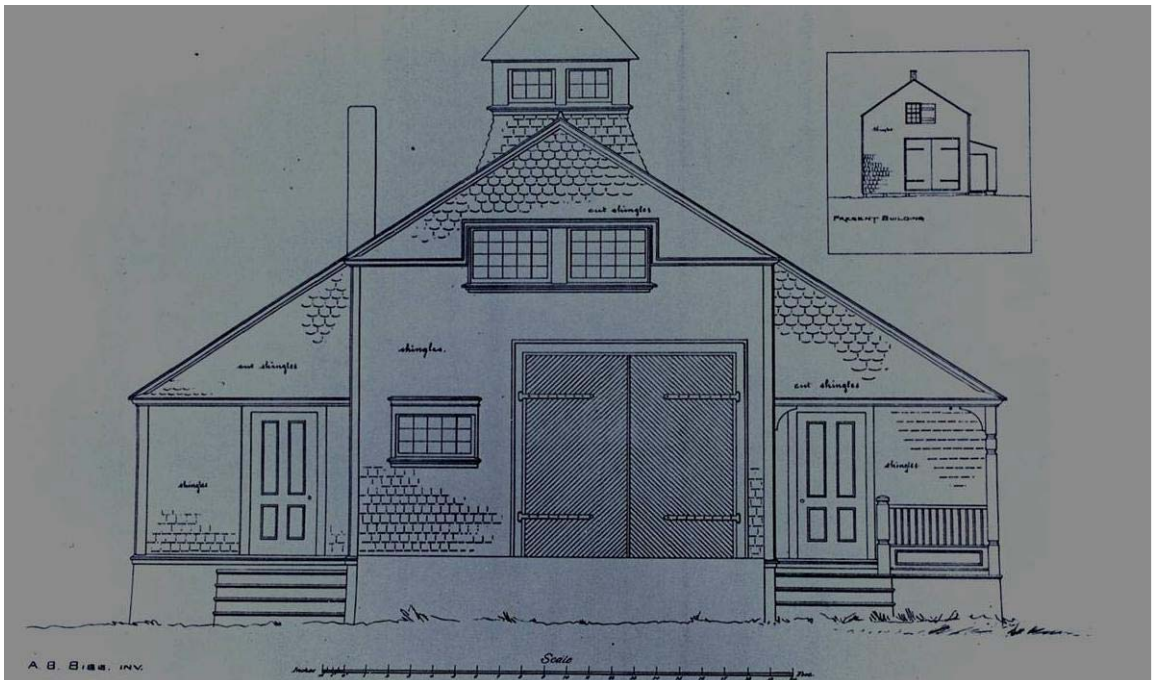

Figure 3-10 Historic Life Saving Station

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND GENERAL IMPACT DISCUSSION

4.1 Geological Resources

Impacts to geological resources include any disruption to sand dunes, soils, bedrock, streambeds, etc., caused by development of the various alternatives under consideration. The effects on these resources will be limited to those areas affected by the construction of new facilities and the supply of utilities.

Sand dunes provide a transition from coastal beaches to upland areas in the Park and include primary dunes, foredunes, and backdunes.

Primary dunes are the dunes closest to the ocean and are formed as wind-blown sand accumulates at the base of vegetation and beach debris. Dominant vegetation on primary dunes includes American beach grass, seaside goldenrod, sea rocket, and wormwood. In addition, the backside of primary dunes may support low-growing shrubs, such as poison ivy and fragrant bayberry. Foredunes comprise the oceanside face of primary dunes. Foredunes are particularly dynamic regions of sand dune habitat and change frequently in accordance with weather, wind, and human activity. Although vegetation on foredunes is generally sparse, these areas, as well as the backsides of primary dunes, sometimes are used heavily by nesting shorebirds. Backdunes, or secondary dunes, are the dunes farthest from the ocean and are located behind the primary dunes. Dominant vegetation on backdunes includes beach grass, goldenrod, sea rocket, poison ivy, and bayberry. Backdunes provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, including eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) and the eastern kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*).

Backdunes border the south side of the Project Site but are located an estimated 200 feet away from where construction is planned. Dunes in this area divide the main beach from Burma Road eventually rising approximately 15-20 feet above road elevation. American beach grass is the dominant plant in dune areas.

4.2 Wetlands

Potential impacts on wetlands include the effects of the development alternatives on low lying areas that contain important habitat areas. The area of impact is presently vegetated with mowed grass and a grove of Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) bushes, a non-native invasive species that was originally planted for wildlife habitat.

A wetlands delineation of Park resources was completed in 1997 by a SUNY Stony Brook graduate student (Caldecutt, 1997). Wetland/upland wetland determinations were performed in accordance with the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual. Sites of high wetland concentration as identified by the USFWS National Wetland Inventory Maps and aerial photography, were investigated for the entire island. The report found that there were 19 wetland sites in the region bounded by RMSP to the hamlet of Kismet. Nine of these wetlands are located within 500 feet from the eastern edge of Entrance Triangle. All wetlands are located in a vegetation category known as

"brackish meadow" directly east of the Project Site near the boardwalk and close to the present boundary between RMSP and the Park. Inland cranberry bogs characterize these wetland areas and the primary vegetation is twig rush and cranberry plants.

A wetland area of roughly 1.5 acres is identified in the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) and located 300 feet southwest of the site (PSS1/EM5C). An additional NWI wetland area of roughly 0.30 acre is identified approximately 600 feet from the site.

4.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

Potential impacts on threatened and endangered species include the effects of the development alternatives on the specific habitat, flight patterns, animals and the potential loss of plant life throughout the site. These effects are limited to those parts of the Park site that are potentially impacted by the construction of the new building, parking area and alterations to the existing road configuration.

State-listed (rare) species that use Park habitat include the common tern, (*Sterna hirundo*), least terns (*Sterna antillarum*), and seabeach knotweed (*Polygonum glaucum*).

Federally listed threatened species that consistently use Park habitat are the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and the seabeach amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilus*) (see September 26, 2002 USFWS letter in Appendix A). The federally listed endangered roseate tern (*Sterna dougalli*) has been sighted in 1993 through 1995 when habitat monitors were trained to look for this shorebird, but has not been observed to breed on Fire Island. A fourth species that has not been sighted on Fire Island within the recent past, but that has been restored to nearby areas and could potentially be found on Fire Island, is the northeast beach tiger beetle (*Cicindela dorsalis dorsalis*). No habitat in the project impact area is currently designated or proposed "critical habitat" in accordance with provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

Protective measures include limiting or eliminating beach driving in preferred habitat areas, patrolling for the presence of potential predators including domestic pets, and the fencing of plover and tern nesting sites. Approximately seven miles on the eastern end of the Park (Smith Point to Watch Hill) will be closed to vehicles beginning March 1 to help protect this site. The USFWS is providing guidance on enforcement of the Endangered Species Act particularly in the habitat management for these species.

The piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) shorebird species was designated as a federally threatened species in 1986 under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973. Piping plovers are small light-colored shorebirds that breed on the northern Great Plains, along the Great Lakes, and along the Atlantic Coast from Newfoundland to South Carolina. Piping plovers winter along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts from North Carolina south and west to Florida, Texas and Mexico, as well as in the Bahamas and West Indies. Piping plovers breed along the Atlantic Coast from March through August (Dyer et al. 1988). Nests are shallow depressions in sand, mixed with pebbles or shells in areas with little or no vegetation. Nesting locations are on sandy beaches and spits above the high

tide line, on gently sloping dunes, in blowout areas behind dunes, in washover areas between dunes and on sandy dredge material.

On Fire Island, adults forage on the ocean and bay beaches, in overwash areas, swale areas with sparse vegetation, and in vernal pool habitats. The primary habitat for breeding is along wide ocean beaches and overwash areas. Due to its rarity, available data identified only two to four nests per year in the late 1980's, with the numbers declining in the 1990's. In accordance with ESA and the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) Atlantic Coast Population Recovery Plan guidelines, extraordinary efforts are implemented each year to ensure a successful productivity for each seasons young. Within the past three years, FINS has proudly witnessed an increase in overall piping plover nest productivity. From an average of 1.8 (out of a possible 4) piping plover chicks fledged per nest site in 2003, to 2.2 in 2004, and an impressive 2.4 average in 2005.

The Park will continue to manage plovers using the most beneficial methods. Beach areas containing endangered shorebirds are being outfitted with special posts with string and flagging designed to give breeding adults a 50-meter buffer from pedestrian disturbance, in accordance with USFWS guidelines. In places where the beach is narrower than 50 meters, the fencing will be placed so as to restrict any vehicle traffic to the intertidal zone in those areas.

Based on past FIIS-T&E species monitoring and data collection efforts, recent field reconnaissance site visits, and a good understanding of piping plover/suitable habitat ecology; no habitat within the project area is considered “critical habitat” in accordance with the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. Throughout the course of construction, FINS’ wildlife biologist will conduct weekly site visits in a continuing effort to monitor the area for wildlife species (see November 1, 2005 Barrera letter in Appendix A). Concurrence with FIN’s findings from USFWS is anticipated.

The least tern is a shorebird listed nationally as an endangered species and a species of concern in New York State. This small white and black seabird also breeds in colonies, usually on the supratidal beach habitat. Least terns have similar nesting requirements to piping plovers, but tend to require wider beaches and use larger areas of sparsely vegetated dunes. As part of the Park’s Endangered Species Habitat Management Plan, spring beach closures are ordered to protect habitat for piping plovers and least terns.

Extensive development and concomitant habitat modification and impacts from oil and chemical spills, dredging, water pollution, and predation, have placed waterbird colonies at increasing risk, especially in the Northeast. The most significant threats to colonial nesting waterbirds in the SSER are human disturbance, mammalian and avian predation, habitat degradation, and contaminants. Recreational activity on bird-nesting islands and beaches during spring and summer breeding seasons is detrimental to such disturbance-sensitive species as plovers, terns, and wading birds. Nesting colonial waterbirds and piping plovers are especially vulnerable April to August to human intrusion and

disturbance such as trampling, picnicking, boat landing, off-road vehicle use, and disturbance by pets.

Predation is a major problem in waterbird colonies. On beaches, mammalian predators such as foxes, raccoons, rats, dogs, and cats are a major problem. Island colonies, generally free from mammalian predation, may be subject to predation by gulls, crows, black-crowned night herons, and other birds. Predation or parasitism by ticks, ants, and beetles can also occur. Degradation of nesting and foraging habitat is a major threat to both island-nesters and beach-nesters. Attempts to stabilize and control erosion on beaches often results in a loss of natural diversity and decreased habitat suitability for nesting and feeding plovers. Increased vegetation and succession on some islands may reduce their suitability for nesting by terns and gulls. Contaminants can be a major threat to waterbirds, especially those that feed at or near the top of the aquatic food web where certain pesticides, heavy metals and other contaminants can bio-accumulate at high levels.

An important factor to be recognized in management of colonial nesting waterbirds is that nesting waterbirds move from site to site, one year to the next, even during a nesting season. This can depend on factors including severe weather event, human disturbance, predation, vegetational succession, and expanding populations. Any suitable habitat may be used in a given year whether historical, newly created, or previously unoccupied habitats.

There are over 330 species of migratory of birds recorded on Fire Island representing more than one-third of all species found in North America. Fire Island is well known among birders as one of the best birding locations in the New York area. Table 4-1, "Common Raptor Species," the most widely seen raptor species include the following:

Table 4-1 Common Raptor Species

Turkey Vulture	*Cathartes aura*
Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*
Bald Eagle	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
Northern Harrier	*Circus cyaneus*
Sharp-shinned Hawk	*Accipiter striatus*
Cooper's Hawk	*Accipiter cooperii*
Northern Goshawk	*Accipiter gentiles*
Red-shouldered Hawk	*Buteo lineatus*
Broad-winged Hawk	*Buteo platypterus*
Red-tailed Hawk	*Buteo jamaicensis*
Rough-legged Hawk	*Buteo lagopu*
Golden Eagle	*Aquila chrysaetos*
American Kestrel	*Falco sparverius*
Merlin	*Falco columbarius*
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*

Raptors are viewed by individuals from the raptor-viewing platform (just south of the proposed Project Site). The Fire Island Raptor Enumerators represent a group of individuals that collect data and keep records on the numbers of raptors and their flight patterns in this region. Raptors tend to fly in a pattern across the island near the raptor-viewing platform. It is important that the proposed project be sensitively sited so as to not disturb the raptor flight pattern.

4.4 Air Quality, Traffic and Noise

Air quality, traffic, and noise impacts refer to any significant adverse effects to the surrounding environment caused by development of the site, and the effects of the consequences of that development. The extent of this influence is not limited to the actual development site, but should also include approach roads and adjacent properties.

Air quality, traffic and noise impacts are primarily influenced by the amount of visitors and residents that come to Fire Island to recreate and live. Existing air and noise levels fluctuate greatly depending on traffic levels. Air quality is good overall throughout the Park. Traffic levels on Robert Moses Causeway have reportedly continually increased. The combined number of vehicle passes (including NPS vehicle passes) at the east and west end entrances have increased by over 17,000 vehicles annually over the last 10 years. A brief overview of the change in vehicle passes at both East Ranger Station and West End Gate Entrance is presented in Table 4-2, "Park Vehicle Use."

Table 4-2 Park Vehicle Use

1980	46,000 vehicles
1990	41,000 vehicles
2000	58,549 vehicles

Source: FINS

Generally, traffic and air quality tend to fluctuate with the weather, with highest levels being generated on good weather weekends. Traffic buildup does not occur at the present gate except on rare occasions when 4-6 cars may be waiting in turn. The New West End Entrance Station will be designed to alleviate traffic back up through a more efficient gate system.

4.5 Water Quality and Quantity

Impacts to water quality and quantity include any disruption to existing water resources caused by operations on the development site, both during construction and following the completion of the project. This affected environment is not restricted to the area immediately adjacent to the site, but must also include those downstream areas that may be affected by nonpoint source pollution. There are no water bodies on the Project Site.

There are no issues with water quantity. Potable water will be piped to the site from an artesian well located at the Annex approximately 2,600 feet east of the Entrance Triangle along Burma Road.

4.6 Land Use

Land use impacts include any changes to the use of the various parts of the development site, including occupation, ownership and type of use, caused by the alternatives under consideration. The extent of the affected area is limited to the actual parcels of land owned by the National Park Service, and those parcels that may be purchased or leased under any of the alternatives.

The Project Site is located on the Entrance Triangle (see Figure 3-3), part of a tract of land belonging to the State of New York and part of RMSP. The Project Site is located on the Entrance Triangle (see Figure 2-3), part of a tract of land that belongs to the State of New York and is part of RMSP. The Park has received a letter of intent from the State of New York stating that the land will be donated via an easement to the NPS. The Park has also received permission from the State to adjust the boundary of the National Seashore around the easement as seen in Figure 2-4). Although NPS land acquisition authority is limited to real property within the Seashore boundaries [see 16 U.S.C. § 459e-1], boundary revisions to accept donations of State Land adjacent to the Seashore are authorized by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act [see 16 U.S.C. § 460*l*-9(c)(1)(ii)].

There are presently no active land uses in the Entrance Triangle. It represents a manmade transition area from RMSP traffic exit area and the Park created upon the construction of Robert Moses Causeway in 1939.

The Project Site is located in several jurisdictions. Any activities carried out in this location must be consistent with applicable rules and regulations of the various jurisdictions. The Park is in the municipal jurisdiction of the Town of Islip and Suffolk County. New York State has jurisdiction over activities relating to the South Shore Estuary Reserve, and the federal government regulates activities inside the boundaries of the Fire Island National Seashore. See Section 12.0 Compliance/Permit Requirements for a complete listing of involved compliance agencies. The Town of Islip enforces a local zoning ordinance, however, state and federal lands are not subject to local review. Suffolk County's Health Code Rules and Regulations are applicable, therefore, on-site wastewater disposal plans will be subject to County review.

4.7 Socioeconomic Environment

Impacts on socioeconomic environments include the effects of any proposed development on employment, occupation, economic infrastructure, etc. The extent of these effects is not limited to the actual site, but must include adjacent and nearby businesses which may be affected by any of the alternatives. The site itself represents an open grassy area free from other land uses except for roadways on either side for access to the Park. Impacts to the socioeconomic environment will be insignificant.

4.8 Recreational Resources

Impacts on recreation resources include any effects on both the provision of recreational activities on site and access to recreational facilities. The affected environment in this case is not only the site itself, but also those recreational facilities on Fire Island that the site enables access to.

The western Park gateway provides important public access to beaches, other public resources, and private lands. Specific sites to visit include the Visitors Center, Fire Island Lighthouse, Sunken Forest, Wilderness Area, and the William Floyd Estate. Recreational activities include backpacking, bird watching, boating, camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, interpretive programs, nature walks, stargazing, swimming, and wildlife viewing. The Project will make every effort to accommodate public needs while protecting natural resources.

4.9 Visitor Experience

Impacts to visitor experience include the effects of the development alternatives on the aesthetic experience of visitors using or passing through the site. These effects are not limited to those parts of the development alternatives that are accessible to members of the general public, but also include any areas that are visible during their experience. Climbing visitor numbers indicate that visitors have a generally positive experience at FINS.

Since there is no physical barrier until visitors are well into the Park, visitors to the New West End Entrance Station presently do not experience any shift from RMSP to FINS lands. They are largely unaware of land ownership and rules related to FINS and this can create significant issues for Park rangers.

In terms of wildlife, visitors may encounter deer and other wildlife in the region. The deer in particular often present a potential conflict with automobiles and motorists have to be careful along the entire Robert Moses Causeway.

4.10 Visitor Interpretive Information

Impacts on educational resources include the effects on educational resources available within the site as a result of carrying out any of the proposed alternatives. This affected environment is limited to those parts of the site that are accessible to members of the general public. There is presently no opportunity for public interaction with interpretive information except at the Lighthouse and along some of the boardwalks to the beaches. Enhanced interpretive media should provide better education for recreational users.

4.11 Urban Quality

Impacts relating to urban quality include the effects on the quality of the built urban environment of constructing any of the proposed alternatives. The extent of this affected

environment is not limited to the actual site, but must include the surrounding area of which the site forms an integral part. From a traffic point of view, the Project Site has urban qualities since it represents the only western point of access into FINS. It is also adjacent to seasonally busy RMSP. Fire Island is regionally part of the New York Metropolitan Area and must accommodate a high number of visitors from this urban area. Fire Island itself can be described as primarily rural recreational. The Project Site will transform from a vacant lot to a building with associated parking. Occasional buildings to accommodate public need exist throughout Fire Island and FINS itself, therefore the new proposed building will not be inconsistent with the existing urban quality of the area.

4.12 Traffic, Parking and Pedestrian Access

Impacts to access and parking include any increase or decrease in the availability of public and staff car parking as a result of carrying out the alternatives under consideration. The directly affected resource is the available parking on the site only. Pedestrian access to FINS will improve with the safer passenger drop off zone in Alternative B.

4.13 Universal Accessibility

Impacts on universal accessibility include the effects of the development alternatives on the accessibility of handicapped persons using or passing through the site. These effects are limited to those parts of the site that are accessible to the general public, and the areas occupied by those members of staff whose duties can be carried out by handicapped persons.

4.14 Utilities

Impacts on utilities include how the extension of existing utilities will impact the affected environment. These effects could be significant depending on where any resource disturbance would take place during the extension of power and water lines. Utilities including power and water will be provided from sources at the present Park checkpoint (the Annex) just east of the Fire Island Lighthouse. Power lines are located just south of site along Burma Road. Pipes and wires, sized appropriately to service the Project, will be buried along Burma Road at the same time Burma Road is resurfaced with crushed shells (in the planning process). Water pressure and volume will be provided by an artesian well near the Annex. This potable water source is more than adequate to service the site. New public restrooms will be provided with entrances from the outside to allow for comfortable public access.

4.15 Access to Park Public and Private Lands

Impacts on beach accessibility include the ability of members of the public to access Park lands from the western approach at the end of Robert Moses Causeway via Burma Road.

There is limited motorized access to the Park. Vehicle access is controlled by Title 36 Off -Road Vehicle Regulations. According to the Chief Ranger, the regulation presently allows permits for no more than 145 year-round residents, 90 part-time residents, 80 commercial vehicles and various municipal and utility vehicles. There are limitations on the number of trips permitted vehicles can make to and from the island, and driving is prohibited during periods when ferry services are adequate. Permitted vehicles can drive along the beach except for dune areas. Dune crossing areas are the only access allowed for vehicles in getting from the beach to the community areas.

Visitors and residents may use parking lots at RMSP all year round for a fee and then travel in by foot to the various Park sites. They can arrive there via a network of boardwalks and Burma Road, which connect the beaches and various Park sites.

In addition to NPS, the towns of Brookhaven and Islip issue driving permits, which are enforced by the Suffolk County Police Department. The villages of Ocean Beach and Saltaire also issue permits with enforcement power held by Ocean Beach Police and Saltaire Security. This results in more than one layer of government authority, which often leads to inconsistencies in enforcement of the rules.

The National Park Service (NPS) convened a citizen advisory group to help it develop new regulations for off-road driving within the park. This negotiated rulemaking process reached consensus on a number of aspects of off-road vehicle use and the park is currently developing a proposed rule which would incorporate these as amendments to the regulations presently codified in Title 36 CFR Part 7.20, the special regulations that apply to Fire Island National Seashore (FINS). The regulations utilized by Fire Island National Seashore [contained in Parts 1 through 7 of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)] are the basic mechanisms used by the National Park Service (NPS) to protect the natural and cultural resources of the parks and to protect visitors and property within the parks.

Consistent with the framework developed by the negotiated rulemaking group, the new regulations are intended to reduce the amount of driving; mitigate impact to park resources; offer uniform regulations adopted by all jurisdictions; share more enforcement responsibilities with Suffolk County Police Marine Bureau; place federal enforcement primarily at the checkpoints; and continue to manage the Burma Road as an off-road driving route. The negotiated rulemaking group found that the existing regulations are confusing; conflict with other regulations contained within Title 36 CFR 7.20; and also conflict with regulations of other jurisdictions within park boundaries. The existing west end entrance to the park is a vital component of the park's driving monitoring program. The effort will result in revisions to the existing Off-Road Vehicle Regulations, which may result in the West End Entrance Gate receiving more traffic. Regardless of the outcome, this EA is a separate and independent effort from the Reg-Neg.

4.16 Public Health and Safety

Public health issues include the effects of the development alternatives on any health or safety issues affecting the general public. The relevant areas are limited to the development site.

Several public health issues are relevant for the Project Site. They include Lyme disease, West Nile virus and poison ivy. Among these, Lyme disease infections, which can be spread by the deer tick *(Ixodes scapularis) or* the lone star tick *(Amblyoma americanum)*. Fire Island, like the rest of Suffolk County, has a high incidence of Lyme-infected ticks that can pass the disease on to humans. However, deer are an incompetent host for the Lyme bacteria. A tick that takes a blood meal from a Lyme-infected deer does not obtain the bacteria from the deer. Most infected ticks get the bacteria by feeding on other animals, such as mice and birds. Questing ticks (ticks seeking to attach to a host and feed) occur on shrubs and leaf litter, and are picked up by all animals (including deer). NPS provides literature on the prevention of tick bites to its visitors.

Mosquitoes are known to transmit both Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV). Although several species of mosquitoes live at Fire Island, the risk of contracting EEE or WNV at the park is low. FINS generally lacks the habitat where EEE and WNV-transmitting mosquitoes originate. However, to ensure the health and safety of residents, visitors and employees, the National Park Service has installed a monitoring program at Fire Island National Seashore to detect any incidence of EEE or WNV in the mosquito population.

FINS recommends visitors stay on the boardwalks to help avoid encounters with poison ivy plants. Poison ivy leaves and stems contain urishiol oil, which can cause a red itchy rash or blisters several days after exposure.

4.17 Historic and Cultural Resources

Impacts on historic resources include the effects of the development alternatives on any historic structures and places that are on or can be seen from the affected lands. The Park has 41 structures that it recognizes as historically and/or culturally important, including the outbuildings at the William Floyd Estate, the Coast Guard Annex and the Fire Island Lighthouse and Keepers' Quarters.

The Fire Island Lighthouse is both a State and National Landmark, listed on the State Historic Register of Historic Places (see November 27, 2002 NYSOPRHP letter in Appendix A). FINS is required to coordinate review of the proposed work and building design with NYSOPRHP.

Constructed in 1858, the Lighthouse was originally constructed on the western point of Fire Island. Over a long period of time, sand erosion and redeposition processes

(accretion) substantially built up the lands on the west end creating the illusion that the Lighthouse had been moved. The Fire Island Lighthouse is now located five miles east of Democrat Point (see Figure 4-1).

Figure 4-1 Fire Island Lighthouse and Keepers' Quarters

Fire Island Light Station (historic name) tells the story of the lifesaving ethic embodied in the U.S. Lighthouse Service, the U.S. Life Saving Service, and the U.S. Coast Guard. The Lighthouse was an important landmark for transatlantic ships coming into New York Harbor at the turn of the last century. This original 74-foot tower was not effective due to its lack of height and was taken down. Today a circular ring of bricks and stone are all that remain of the original lighthouse. In 1857 Congress appropriated funds for the construction of a new tower, 168 feet tall.

The Fire Island Lighthouse was decommissioned as an aid to navigation on December 31, 1973. In 1982, the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society was formed. They successfully raised over 1.2 million dollars for the restoration and preservation of the Fire Island Lighthouse. In 1984, the Fire Island Lighthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Lighthouse was restored to its 1939 condition, which is when electricity was first installed. On Memorial Day, May 28, 1986, the Fire Island Lighthouse was relit and reinstated as an official aid to navigation.

In December 1996 the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service took over the maintenance and operation of the Fire Island Lighthouse and Keeper's Quarters. The Lighthouse is a fully automated operation and the maintenance and volunteers provide interpretation of the site. Maintenance of the light itself remains under the jurisdiction of the United States Coast Guard and NPS.

One of a number of Fire Island Life Saving Stations was located southeast of the proposed West End Entrance Station developed site. The architecture of the new West End Entrance Station is to be reminiscent of the Life Saving Station.
Based on a response received from the NYSOPRHP (see November 27, 2002 letter in Appendix A), a Phase 1 Archaeological Survey is warranted prior to any ground disturbance activity on the proposed site unless substantial ground disturbance can be documented. Impacts to archeological resources, however, are expected to be minimal. The Entrance Triangle represents a built up area that was designed to support the eastern end of the Robert Moses Causeway (the loop), which was constructed in the early 1970's when Field 5 was also constructed.

A Phase 1 archeological investigation was completed on July 15, 2005. An End-Of-Fieldwork Memorandum regarding the outcome of the investigation can be found in Appendix A. A letter of concurrence of the finding of "No Effect" was received from NYSOPRHP on December 5, 2005. The purpose of the investigation was to assess archeological deposits that may be disturbed during construction of the new station and installation of utilities to service the station. A total of 70 shovel tests exhibited deposits consisting of unsorted fill and/or dune sand. No prehistoric artifacts or materials were found yielding the recommendation that no further archeological investigations are warranted.

4.18 Visual Resources

The Fire Island Lighthouse is an important public visual resource. It serves as a physical landmark and point of orientation for visitors. Another important visual resource is the view from the Hawk Watch Station located just south of the Project Site.

4.19 Potential for Flooding

Coastal flooding occurs on Fire Island. Historically, the most wide spread damage from flooding occurred as a result of the 1938 Hurricane. The most significant storm in recent years to affect Fire Island was the December 1992 nor'easter. The Town of Islip has taken special measures to address flooding and erosion on Fire Island and regularly reviews building permits for conformance with flood regulations.

Floodplain maps prepared by FEMA indicate that the majority of the site is located in the Zone VE, meaning it is an area that is typically inundated by 100-year flood events that are effected and exacerbated by wave action. The area located at the top of Entrance Triangle is indicated as being in Zone AE, meaning it is an area that is typically inundated by 100-year flood events. B Flood Elevations (BFE's) have been determined for the entire project area. The Project Site is located at the highest point of elevation in the vicinity of the Park western boundary and has no recent history of flooding.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

5.1 Geological Resources

5.1.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts anticipated.

5.1.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
The construction of underground utilities may temporarily disturb soils along Burma Road and into the site. The site itself primarily consists of sand and fill materials. Impacts are considered short-term and reversible.

5.1.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.1.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.2 Wetlands

5.2.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts to wetlands are anticipated.

5.2.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
There are no wetlands in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Project Site therefore no impacts are anticipated.

5.2.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.2.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

5.3.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No anticipated impacts.

5.3.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
Since there are no threatened or endangered species on the Project Site there are no anticipated impacts to these resources.

5.3.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.3.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.4 Air Quality, Traffic and Noise

5.4.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
The no action alternative will likely result in increased traffic from curiosity seekers, people looking to drop off and pick up passengers, and permit holders. As time goes on and the numbers of people recreating in the area continues to grow at the west end gate, vehicle lines trying to pass through the gate will increase from the current maximum level of 5-6 vehicles. This will increase the potential for vehicle to vehicle and vehicle to pedestrian accidents on Burma Road before the west end gate.

5.4.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
The preferred alternative will relieve existing vehicle lines at the western gateway by eliminating the confusing entry at the end of Robert Moses Causeway. Good signage will enable those who go into the Park efficient means to do so and effectively direct curiosity seekers out of the area and back out onto Robert Moses Causeway. This alternative also provides positive traffic benefits by creating a temporary parking area for

pedestrians being dropped-off or picked up in this location. By providing this benefit, the existing issue of unauthorized drop-off parking at the eastern end of the Robert Moses Causeway is eliminated.

5.4.3 Alternative C

Impacts
The number of parking spaces offered at the New West End Entrance Station is not adequate to accommodate the anticipated demand. Also, there is no provision for temporary parking for persons dropping –off and picking up Park pedestrians. Traffic flow on the Robert Moses Causeway may be impacted due to potential stacking of vehicles waiting at the gate facility.

5.4.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative C.

5.5 Water Quality and Quantity

5.5.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts to water resources are anticipated.

5.5.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
There are no water bodies or wetlands in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Project Site therefore no impacts are anticipated.

Impacts to the existing potable water supply system at the Annex will be minimal since the source is artesian. Anticipated usage is projected at less than 1,000 gallons per day. Low flush toilets and water faucets by demand only will be installed to minimize water usage.

Although the building site is in the 100-year floodplain, the site is located at the highest point of elevation in the vicinity of the Park western boundary and has no recent history of flooding.

5.5.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.5.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.6 Land Use

5.6.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts anticipated.

5.6.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
The construction of the New West End Entrance Station and associated parking spaces will result in the loss of approximately 3,000 square feet in what can presently be described as open space. However, the value of the open space is compromised by the adjacent Robert Moses Causeway eastern traffic loop, which endures heavy seasonal traffic. Land use in this area will be improved by providing needed public restrooms, office space and a temporary parking area for drop-off traffic.

5.6.3 Alternative C

Impacts
The most valuable open space on the site has been retained as the area for wastewater disposal field, which falls within the line of site from the raptor-viewing platform in a northeasterly direction where the hawk flight pattern is dominant.

5.6.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Alternative D will result in a greater loss of open space and result in a more significant impact since it will be in the line of sight of the raptor-viewing platform which is a significant visitor attraction.

5.7 Socioeconomic Environment

5.7.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts are anticipated.

5.7.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
The construction of the New West End Entrance Station will provide greater visibility for the Park and, over time, attract additional visitors to the Park. The improved visibility will enhance the image of the Park. The impact is envisioned as infinitely positive since visitors will be empowered to do their part to protect and preserve the Park's important natural and historic resources.

5.7.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.7.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.8 Recreational Resources

5.8.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts are anticipated.

5.8.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
The Preferred Alternative will enhance access and convenience to restrooms. This concept provides for safe pedestrian crossings tying into the network of paths to the beaches, Fire Island Lighthouse, and RMSP.

5.8.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.8.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.9 Visitor Experience

5.9.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
The present visitor experience can be described as confusing, even undefined. There is no gateway identifying the Park. When the visitor approaches Burma Road he is unsure as to exactly what and where he is going. The uninformed visitor has no knowledge that he cannot pass without a permit or that permits are limited to residents. This information is only available beyond the road break at the Annex where parking is available to those who have permits to get through the existing gate system. The result is arriving visitors at the western gate with no permits and no idea what to do next. Because pedestrians also utilize Burma Road, it presents a continual conflict between unauthorized vehicles and authorized pedestrians.

NPS and other interested partners are promoting public education about deer, while continuing a research project testing the effectiveness of deer birth control as a means of population control. This research involves darting approximately 200 does per year with a vaccine that prevents pregnancy. The NPS also has the responsibility to enforce the federal law prohibiting the feeding of wildlife.

5.9.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
The preferred Alternative will have a positive effect on the visitor experience because pedestrian visitors will have the ability to inquire about Park resources as well as rules for traveling within the Park. This gives Park staff more time to devote to other Park management duties.

5.9.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.9.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.10 Visitor Interpretive Information

5.10.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
This alternative would result in no improvement in the ability of Park staff to provide public access to additional information about Park interpretive programs.

5.10.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
This alternative would result in a significant improvement in the ability of Park staff to provide public access to additional information about Park interpretive programs. These programs provide important public exposure to information about natural resource conservation and preservation. The Park believes that a well-informed public results in more public cooperation and less enforcement action leaving more time to devote to other important Park objectives. The ability of the NPS to provide a strong and positive message through a "gateway" presence and well-designed signage will also aid in public compliance and cooperation regarding the rules and regulations of the Park.

5.10.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.10.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.11 Urban Quality

5.11.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts on urban quality are anticipated.

5.11.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
Although Fire Island itself has many wild natural areas, it is also an urbanized area from the standpoint that it can and does accommodate millions of people by car and other means to the wide expanses of beaches and other public areas every year. The lands along Robert Moses Causeway contain extensive parking lots and buildings interspersed with natural areas. An open public arena is located near the bridge intersection with Robert Moses Causeway. The New West End Entrance Station will be located at the end of the Robert Moses Causeway corridor and will be small in comparison to other structures at Parking Field 5 of RMSP, and compatible with the existing raptor-viewing platform. The building is, therefore, consistent and will not have a significant impact on the existing urban quality of the area.

5.11.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.11.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.12 Traffic, Parking and Pedestrian Accessibility

5.12.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts anticipated.

5.12.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
The Preferred Alternative will provide very limited public parking. The intention of the small parking lot at the new entry station is for administrative use and a vehicle or vehicles coming in to pick up driving permits. Signage will preclude most other vehicles from entering this space. The building will be primarily designed to respond to the needs of the pedestrian public, which pass in great numbers on their way to the beaches and private lands within the Park. A drop-off temporary parking lot will be provided adjacent to the building's parking lot to relieve the existing problem at the end of Robert Moses Causeway. Long-term and day use parking will continue to only be allowed in RMSP parking lots. These resources will not be significantly impacted because the parking to be provided at the Project Site is for administrative use only.

5.12.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Temporary parking needs are minimally addressed in this alternative. No provision for temporary drop-off parking is provided.

5.12.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative C.

5.13 Universal Accessibility

5.13.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts anticipated.

5.13.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
The Preferred Alternative will make the new building workspace and all public areas, including restrooms and parking areas, comply with Federal ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities. Walkways leading to and from the building will be designed with crosswalks where necessary and will conveniently connect to pathways into and out of the building and parking area.

5.13.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.13.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.14 Utilities

5.14.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No anticipated impact.

5.14.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
Potable water will be piped to the Project Site from the Annex from an existing source with plenty of capacity. Sanitary waste will be disposed of on-site. The ability to provide these utilities to the site will give pedestrians an additional restroom source between Parking Field 5 and the Annex, a distance of approximately 1.5 miles. This will take some pressure off the Annex restrooms. The utilities improvement is, therefore, a positive public benefit.

5.14.3 Alternative C

Impacts

Same as Alternative B.

5.14.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B. An additional impact is that sanitary effluent will have to be pumped uphill to the leach field west of the building's location.

5.15 Access To Public and Private Lands

5.15.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
The No Action Alternative will cause the issues of access to FINS from the western entrance to exacerbate. The number of visitors and vehicles utilizing this entrance continues to increase and a more effective gate operation is necessary. .

5.15.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
The Preferred Alternative will provide positive public benefits for accessibility. It will provide much improved access into the Park for both vehicles and pedestrians. It will inform the pedestrian public of the beach resources and the rules within the Park. This alternative will also provide connections to existing RMSP and NPS walkways, which results in safer pedestrian access to and from the waterfront, and protects the sensitive vegetation in the dune and wetland areas.

5.15.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Impacts are anticipated to be the same as for the Preferred Alternative. Alternative B provides the highest public visibility and, therefore, the highest benefit due to the potential of more people being exposed to the building.

5.15.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.16 Public Safety

5.16.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
There is a negative impact associated with the no action alternative since there will continue to be an increased risk between vehicles and pedestrians along Burma Road.

5.16.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
The Preferred Alternative will generate positive benefits for public health in that it will relieve non-essential vehicles from traveling on Burma Road thereby eliminating a long-standing safety problem with vehicles trying to turn around once they realize they cannot get through the gate. The Project will also provide additional restroom facilities, a temporary parking area for drop-offs and pick-ups, and paths from existing walkways to separate the traffic from pedestrians. These actions will, therefore, have positive benefits on overall public health and safety.

5.16.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B except there is no provision for a temporary parking area for drop-offs and pick-ups.

5.16.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B except there is no provision for a temporary parking area for drop-offs and pick-ups.

5.17 Historic and Cultural Resources

5.17.1 Alternative A – No Action Alternative

Impacts
No anticipated impacts.

5.17.2 Alternative B – Preferred Alternative

Impacts
There are no anticipated impacts since the Phase I archeological investigation did not yield any discernable prehistoric or historic sites or features potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. No further investigation was recommended. Section 106 Review is being conducted by NYSOPRHP. A letter of "No Effect" from NYSOPRHP has been received (see Appendix A).

5.17.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.17.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Same as Alternative B.

5.18 Visual Resources

5.18.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts anticipated.

5.18.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
Alternative B provides the highest public visibility and, therefore, the highest benefit due to the potential of more people being exposed to the building. This alternative does not impede the viewshed to the Fire Island Lighthouse, an important historic and visual landmark for visitors.

5.18.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Impacts are anticipated to be the same as for the Preferred Alternative. Alternative B provides the highest public visibility and, therefore, the highest benefit due to the potential of more people being exposed to the building.

5.18.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Alternative D will result in a greater loss of open space and result in a more significant impact since it will be in the line of sight of the raptor-viewing platform, which is a significant visitor attraction. This alternative will significantly impede the viewshed to the Fire Island Lighthouse.

5.19 Potential for Flooding

5.19.1 Alternative A - No Action Alternative

Impacts
No impacts anticipated.

5.19.2 Alternative B - Preferred Alternative

Impacts
Although the building site is in the 100-year floodplain, the site is located at the highest point of elevation in the vicinity of the Park western boundary and has no recent history of flooding.

A Statement of Findings for Wetlands and Floodplains has been prepared for the project and can be found in Appendix B. The document provides that the natural floodplain values would be protected and potentially hazardous conditions associated with flood events would be minimized. The document illustrates that the proposed action is consistent with the policies and procedures of NPS Special Directive 93-4, Floodplain Management Guidelines, Director's Order #77-1: Wetland Protection, including the "no net loss of wetlands" policy.

5.19.3 Alternative C

Impacts
Impacts are anticipated to be the same as for the Preferred Alternative. Alternative B provides the highest public visibility and, therefore, the highest benefit due to the potential of more people being exposed to the building.

5.19.4 Alternative D

Impacts
Alternative D has the most significant visual impact on the Fire Island Lighthouse and the lowest visual benefit for visitors seeking the Entrance Building.

6.0 ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Under NPS policy, the alternative analyzed that would be most beneficial for the environment or have the least adverse impacts should be identified. Of these alternatives selected, the Preferred Alternative is also the environmentally preferred alternative.

For the purposes of this analysis, intensity or severity of the impact is defined as follows:

- Negligible: Impact to the resource or discipline is barely perceptible and not measurable, generally confined to a small area or a point in time.
- Minor: Impact to the resource or discipline is perceptible and may be measurable, generally impact is confined to specific areas within the park.
- Moderate: Impact is clearly detectable and could have appreciable effect on the resource or discipline throughout the park.
- Major: Impact would have a substantial, highly noticeable influence on the resource or discipline throughout the park and surrounding lands.
- Positive: Impacts would promote the preservation of the resource.

Table 6-1, "Summary of Potential Impacts," illustrates the levels of impacts and identifies positive impacts between the individual alternatives. Clearly, the Preferred Alternative offers the greatest benefit with the least environmental effect.

TABLE 6-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Type of Impact	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B (Preferred)	Alternative C	Alternative D
Wetlands	Negligible Impact	Negligible Impact	Minor Impact	Minor Impact
Sand Dunes	Negligible Impact	Negligible Impact	Minor Impact	Minor Impact
Plant Communities	Negligible Impact	Negligible Impact	Minor Impact	Minor Impact
Piping Plover	Negligible Impact	Negligible Impact	Minor Impact	Minor Impact
Visual Impact	Negligible Impact	Minor Impact	Minor Impact	Major Impact
Archaeology	Negligible Impact	Negligible Impact	Minor Impact	Minor Impact
Historic Buildings	Negligible Impact	Negligible Impact	Minor Impact	Major Impact
Visitor Experience	Moderate Impact	Positive Impact	Positive Impact	Positive Impact
Raptor Watch Platform	Negligible Impact	Minor Impact	Minor Impact	Major Impact
Land Use	Moderate Impact	Minor Impact	Minor Impact	Moderate Impact
Parking and Access	Major Impact	Positive Impact	Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact

7.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Under NEPA law and NPS policy, potential cumulative impacts should be described in these sections. The term "cumulative impacts or effects" is generally used to describe the phenomenon of changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced, small-scale alterations.

The Project is not designed or anticipated to increase visitation at FINS and therefore no meaningful contribution to cumulative impacts will be made. The existing entry gate area will be closed and a new entry gate established at a different location. This will not result in any increased impacts on natural or other resources.

Cumulative impacts are primarily positive and include increased public visibility, education, and enhanced access to Park lands.

8.0 NON-IMPAIRMENT

Under the NPS Organic Act of 1916, current Policies and Director's Orders, Park and other units of the National Park System are to be managed to preserve their scenic, natural and cultural resource values so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. This establishes a "non-impairment" standard that prohibits NPS officials from allowing any project or use that would impair Park resources and values, as deemed significant in the Park's legislative enactment, focused on in the Park's mission statement and addressed in the Park's General Management Plan. The determination of impairment rests with the professional judgment of the given Park's manager, consistent with the Park's legislation, purpose and mission, NPS Policies and Orders, as well as the Park's Management Plan.

The enabling legislation for this Project is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires the National Park Service (NPS) and other federal agencies to conduct a formal environmental review process on proposed projects prior to decisions on their implementation. This process is designed to disclose and analyze the purposes and needs for a project, the potential alternatives to and impacts from the project, and provide for public involvement. Full public review of the EA will be made available in accordance with the regulations contained in NPS's Director's Order #12, "Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making."

The National Park Service believes that the Preferred Alternative in this environmental assessment would not cause impairment to Park resource values. The project is consistent with relevant federal laws and the Park's current General Management Plan. Construction of an adequate secured vehicle entry system for residents, service providers, visitors and Park personnel is a long-standing goal.

9.0 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Under NPS policies, the environmental review of proposed projects should include consideration of "environmental justice" issues. These are issues that relate to whether the project would harm or disproportionately affect socio-economically disadvantaged groups of people. These issues generally arise where a project may cause undesirable or harmful impacts that would not be politically feasible to impose in a wealthy or influential community.

The Project is being implemented on Fire Island, several miles from the nearest municipality. Thus, it is not expected to have a significant impact on the mainland communities and only positive impacts (reduced driving, increased safety) for hamlet communities within the Park. The overall cumulative socioeconomic effect related the Preferred Alternative will be positive in terms of improved public relations and interpretive education to all Park visitors.

10.0 SUSTAINABLE "GREEN" BUILDING DESIGN, MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION

Park staff and consultants plan to integrate the best available and financially feasible "sustainable" or "green" building designs and materials in the new Park visitors contact station. Design components may include glazing of south-facing windows for passive solar, reclaiming heat systems, and roofs with photovoltaic and/or wind generation capabilities. Materials and components may include super insulation, recycled metal for roofing, and recycled materials such as gypsum board, plastic decking, and carpet. Low flush toilets and water conservation faucets will also be installed in restrooms of the new Park Visitors contact station.

During construction activities, best management practices to avoid erosion and potentially harmful runoff will be implemented to prevent impacts to nearby vegetation.

11.0 NEW YORK STATE COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

New York has an approved Coastal Management Program. As such, any Federal agency directly undertaking a development project in the coastal zone must insure that the project is, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the enforceable policies of approved management programs. However, Federal actions are considered under the Federal Consistency provision only. Federal consistency provides Federal agencies with an effective mechanism to document coastal effects and to address State coastal management concerns. Moreover, compliance with the consistency requirement complements National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. Even though the CZMA effects test is different than NEPA's and the CZMA requires Federal agencies to alter projects to be consistent with State CMP policies, NEPA is an effective delivery mechanism for Federal Consistency and often provides necessary background information.

There are eleven applicable Coastal Management Program Policies for this project. The following summary analyzes the consistency of the Project with the identified policies.

Development Policies: Public Services

Policy 5
Encourage the location of development in areas where public services and facilities essential to such development are adequate.

The Preferred Alternative is an improvement of existing facilities. Public services are not available on-site (except for on-site wastewater disposal) but are located approximately one-half mile from the Project Site.

Fish And Wildlife Policies: Significant Habitats

Policy 7
Significant coastal fish and wildlife habitats will be protected, preserved, and where practical, restored so as to maintain their viability as habitats.

There are no significant fish and wildlife habitats on the Preferred Alternative site.

Flooding And Erosion Hazards Policies: Siting Structures

Policy 11
Buildings and other structures will be sited in the coastal area so as to minimize damage to property and the endangering of human lives caused by flooding and erosion.

The Preferred Alternative will be constructed on the lands that have not historically been impacted by significant flooding. The selected site for the Preferred Alternative will have the least potential impact from flooding.

Flooding And Erosion Hazards Policies: Natural Protective Features

Policy 12
Activities or development in the coastal area will be undertaken so as to minimize damage to natural resources and property from flooding and erosion by protecting natural protective features including beaches, dunes, barrier islands and bluffs.

All construction associated with the building, wastewater disposal fields and roads will utilize best management practices to minimize erosion and stormwater runoff from the site.

Public Access Policies: Water-Related Recreation Resources

Policy 19
Protect, maintain, and increase the level and types of access to public water-related recreation resources and facilities

The Project is designed to respond to a need for greater visibility for NPS as well as greatly improve access into the Park and the private lands beyond the West End Gate. The Project will enhance public safety for vehicles and pedestrians who must share the same access in some areas by minimizing shared access points.

Public Access Policies: Public Foreshore

Policy 20
Access to the publicly owned foreshore and to lands immediately adjacent to the foreshore or the water's edge that are publicly owned shall be provided and it shall be provided in a manner compatible with adjoining uses.

The Project will provide needed additional public restroom facilities for people walking from Parking Field 5 to Park beaches and privately owned lands beyond the West End Gate. Pathways to and from the beaches will also be connected and enhanced wherever practicable.

Water And Resources Policies: Innovative Sanitary Waste Systems

Policy 32
Encourage the use of alternative or innovative sanitary waste systems in small communities where the costs of conventional facilities are unreasonably high, given the size of the existing tax base of these communities.

The Preferred Alternative has a limited site for on-site wastewater disposal. The Project will incorporate low flush toilets and water conservation faucets in its new restroom facilities.

12.0 COMPLIANCE/PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

The Federal laws, Executive Orders and regulations, along with associated state and local regulations, that must be fulfilled before the project may be implemented are summarized below**.**

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
This EA assesses impacts and proposals pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires that Federal agencies assess their proposals for a full range of impacts on the natural and cultural environments, and that alternatives are provided and analyzed to decide whether the preferred alternative could have a significant effect on the human environment. This document is to be released for public and agency review for 30 days, after which the National Park Service would decide if the proposed actions are significant enough to require a preparation of an environmental impact statement (ElS). If so, a notice of intent to prepare an ElS would be prepared and announced in the Federal Register If no ElS is required, the Regional Director may sign a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSl), which concludes NEPA compliance for this plan and clears it for funding and implementation.

Endangered Species Act
Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act requires the National Park Service to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out does not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or critical habitat. The Service has been consulted concerning the presence of listed species and critical habitat.

The New York State Environmental Conservation Law contains definitions for NYS Threatened, Endangered, Special Concern Species, and Protected Species. Native plant life is further protected under 6 NYCRR Part 193.3, which defines the number of plants to be found on sites on the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) 7 1/2 minute series maps, or listed Federally, It also defines the term "colony" for plant species. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation administers the state's non-game and endangered (animal and plant) species program. The department has been consulted concerning endangered or threatened species and critical habitats.

Cultural Resources Compliance
The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, is the cornerstone of Federal historic preservation law. It established a national policy of historic preservation that provides for identification and protection of historic and archeological resources.

Section 1 10 of the act requires that government agencies carry out their programs in accordance with, and in furtherance of, national historic preservation policy and that such agencies identify and preserve historic properties under their ownership or control.

Section 106 of the act requires that government agencies take into account the effects of their actions on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on those actions.

At Fire Island National Seashore all potential shoreside cultural sites are evaluated for the potential eligibility of structures or sites for the National Register of Historic Places (Section 110). No activities in the preferred alternative will have an impact on cultural structures or sites.

Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, Floodplain Management and Wetland Protection

These executive orders direct NPS to avoid, to the extent possible, the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with modifying or occupying floodplains and wetlands. They also require NPS to avoid direct or indirect support of floodplains or wetland development whenever there is a practical alternative. A statement of findings must be filed with the fining of no significant impact (FONSI) or the record of decision (ROD).

Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended (CWA) (33 USC 1251-1387)

The US EPA has the responsibility for oversight and review of permits and actions that affect waters of the US. The USACOE is charges with evaluating federal actions that result in potential degradation of waters of the US and issuing permits for actions consistent with the CWA. Since no placement of fill will take place for the project, no Section 404 Permit from the USACOE.

Construction activities that commence on or after March 10, 2003 and disturb one or more acres of land must obtain coverage under the new Phase II Permit Requirements. A SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity (GP-02-01) or an individual permit for all stormwater discharges would be required. The Project Site is less than one acre and, therefore, does not qualify to meet this standard.
The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System has basically the same set of standards. The project will not discharge to surface waters and the site is less than one acre making it ineligible for a permit.

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972

New York has an approved Coastal Management Program. As such, any Federal agency directly undertaking a development project in the coastal zone must insure that the project is, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the enforceable policies of approved management programs. However, Federal actions are considered under the Federal Consistency provision only. Federal consistency provides Federal agencies with an effective mechanism to document coastal effects and to address State coastal management concerns. Moreover, compliance with the consistency requirement complements National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. Even though the CZMA effects test is different than NEPA's and the CZMA requires Federal agencies to alter projects to be consistent with State CMP policies, Federal Consistency will be completed regardless of the alternative ultimately selected for this project.

State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)

NEPA requires that an Environmental Assessment (EA) be prepared when a proposal may have a measurable impact on the environment. If the completed EA shows that the proposal may have a significant effect, an EIS is also required. In order to be also consistent with the NYS SEQRA regulations, a Short Environmental Assessment Form will be completed for the preferred alternative.

Suffolk County Permits

A 404B Individual Septic System Permit from Suffolk County Department of Health will be required prior to construction of the on-site sewage disposal system.

ADA Compliance

The Project will comply with the 2002 Federal Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities.

13.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This EA is being placed on formal public review for 30 days and will be distributed to a variety of agencies and organizations, including those listed under Section 14.0 Coordination and Consultation. In addition, the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society met with the Park and their consultants on February 2003 for a site visit and project presentation. Also in February, the Park and their consultants met separately with representatives from NYSPRHP and RMSP for a site visit and to discuss project.

SECTION 14.0 COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

The conceptualization and development of the New West End Entrance Station occurred over several years and involved many NPS Park staff, other governmental officials, and consultants. The agencies listed below were contacted and or consulted during preparation of this EA:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cortland, NY Field Office;
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Historic Preservation Field Services Office, Peebles Island, NY;
NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service, Habitat Conservation Division, Highlands, NJ.

Letters from USFWS and NYSOPRHP can be found in Appendix A.

The Regional Director of the National Park Service reviewed this environmental assessment and approved its distribution for public comment. A news release was sent to Long Island media contacts announcing the availability of this environmental assessment. Copies of this environmental assessment were sent to relevant Federal, State, and local officials, local libraries, and a list of organizations that have expressed a strong interest in issues affecting Fire Island National Seashore. Upon request, copies will be sent to other interested people. A public meeting may be scheduled during the comment period to explain this assessment, discuss impacts and alternatives, answer questions, and receive public input.

This assessment will also be an informational or base reference to specific requests for action concurrences under the National Historic Preservation Act, and Coastal Zone Management Act as indicated in the preceding Section 12. All comments received on this assessment will be carefully reviewed.

After this review, the Regional Director will either: approve a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and end the NEPA compliance process, or find that one or more significant impacts may occur, and therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared and distributed for public comment. Prior to preparing a FONSI (or Record of Decision (ROD) in the event of processing an EIS) a Statement of Finding on Floodplain Management and Wetland Protection will be prepared to accompany the FONSI or ROD for comparable signature of approval by the Regional Director.

15.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

Prepared by:

Tracey M. Clothier, A.I.C.P., Senior Planner, The LA Group, P.C. (Saratoga Springs, NY).

Reviewed by the following NPS Fire Island National Seashore and Regional Staff:

Michael Bilecki, Chief of Resource Management
Diane Abell, Landscape Architect/Park Planner
Wayne Valentine, Chief Ranger
Paula Valentine, Chief of Interpretation
Jay Lippert, District Ranger
Marie Lawrence, Park Biologist
David Clark, Program Manager Environmental Compliance, NPS Regional Office, Boston
Richard Stavdal, William Floyd Estate Unit Manager

16.0 LIST OF REFERENCES

Conflict Assessment: The Prospects for Building Consensus on Fire Island National Seashore's Vehicle Use Regulations, 1999. Consensus Building Institute. 32 pp.

Director's Order 12 Handbook. National Park Service. 107 pp.

Fire Island National Seashore, Environmental Assessment for Endangered Species Habitat Management, 2003. National Park Service. 39 pp.

Fire Island National Seashore, General Management Plan, 1978. National Park Service. 147 pp.

Fire Island National Seashore, Off-Road Vehicle Regulations, 1987. National Park Service. 13 pp.

Freshwater Wetlands Delineation and Inventory of Wetland Herpetological Species on Fire Island National Seashore, 1997, Caldecutt, William J.5 pp.

Management Policies, 2002. National Park Service. 137 pp.

Negotiated Rulemaking, 2002. National Park Service. 19 pp.

Restoration and Protection of Fire Island, 1938. Long Island State Park Commission.

South Shore Estuary Reserve Technical Report Series, Public Access and Recreation, 1999. South Shore Estuary Reserve Council. 21 pp.

Strategic Plan for Fire Island National Seashore, 2000. National Park Service. 19 pp.

Appendix A
Letters of Record

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
3817 Luker Road
Cortland, NY 13045

RECEIVED
OCT 02 2002
The LA Group

September 26, 2002

Ms. Tracey M. Clothier
Senior Planner
the LA group, P.C.
40 Long Alley
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Dear Ms. Clothier:

This responds to your letter of September 12, 2002, requesting information on the presence of endangered or threatened species in the vicinity of the proposed construction of a building and entry structure at Robert Moses State Park, adjacent to the U.S. Coast Guard Reservation on Fire Island, in the Town of Islip, Suffolk County, New York.

The piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), a Federally listed threatened species, is known to occur in the vicinity of the proposed project site. The project's environmental documents should, therefore, include an evaluation of the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of specific project-related activities on the piping plover or its habitat, and include appropriate measures, if necessary, to protect this species and its habitat. This information should be forwarded to this office and it will be used to evaluate potential impacts on the piping plover or its habitat, and to determine the need for further consultation pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended: 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

Except for the piping plover and occasional transient individuals, no other Federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species under our jurisdiction are known to exist in the project impact area. In addition, no habitat in the project impact area is currently designated or proposed "critical habitat" in accordance with the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. Should project plans change, or if additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

The above comments pertaining to endangered species under our jurisdiction are provided pursuant to the Endangered Species Act. This response does not preclude additional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) comments under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act or other legislation.

Federally listed endangered and threatened marine species may be found near the project area. These species are under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service. You should contact Mr. Stanley Gorski, Habitat and Protected Resources Division, Area Coordinator, National Marine Fisheries Service, James J. Howard Marine Sciences Laboratory, 74 Magruder Road, Highlands, NJ 07732, for additional information (telephone: [732] 872-3037).

The piping plover is also listed as endangered by the State of New York. Project plans should also be coordinated with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (State). The State contact for the piping plover is Mr. Dan Rosenblatt, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Building 40, SUNY, Stony Brook, NY 11794 (telephone: [631] 444-0305).

For additional information on fish and wildlife resources or State-listed species, we suggest you contact the appropriate New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regional office(s) as shown on the enclosed map, and:

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
New York Natural Heritage Program Information Services
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
(518) 402-8935

Since wetlands may be present, you are advised that National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps may or may not be available for the project area. However, while the NWI maps are reasonably accurate, they should not be used in lieu of field surveys for determining the presence of wetlands or delineating wetland boundaries for Federal regulatory purposes. Copies of specific NWI maps can be obtained from:

Cornell Institute for Resource Information Systems
302 Rice Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
(607) 255-4864

Work in certain waters and wetlands of the United States may require a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). If a permit is required, in reviewing the application pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Service may concur, with or without stipulations, or recommend denial of the permit depending upon the potential adverse impacts on fish and wildlife resources associated with project implementation. The need for a Corps permit may be determined by contacting the appropriate Corps office(s) as shown on the enclosed map.

If you require additional information please contact Michael Stoll at (607) 753-9334.

Sincerely,

Mark W. Clough

Acting For
David A. Stilwell
Field Supervisor

2

Enclosure

cc: NYSDEC, Stony Brook, NY (D. Rosenblatt)
NYSDEC, Albany, NY (Natural Heritage Program)
NMFS, Highlands, NJ (Attn: S. Gorski)
NMFS, Milford, CT (Attn: M. Ludwig)
COE, New York, NY

3

OFFICE OF PARKS · RECREATION · HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE
Bernadette Castro
Commissioner

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189 518-237-8643

November 27, 2002

RECEIVED
2002
The LA Group

Ms. Tracey M. Clothier
Senior Planner
The LA Group
40 Long Alley
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

Re: USCG
West End Entrance Station
T/Islip, Suffolk County
02PR04524

Dear Ms. Clothier:

Thank you for requesting the comments of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). We have begun to review the project in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the relevant implementing regulations.

The National Register of Historic Places listed Fire Island Light Station appears to be within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the proposed new west end entrance station. The project sponsor should coordinate review of the proposed work and building design with this office. There are no further National Register listed or eligible properties in the project vicinity.

Based on reported resources within the vicinity of your project site, it is the OPRHP opinion that a Phase 1 archeological survey is warranted prior to any ground disturbing activity at this location. The attached "Archeology Comments" provides further information regarding the nature of a Phase 1 survey. For additional information please contact the OPRHP staff archeologist indicated on the attachment.

I would like to note that our response was delayed by the lack of return address, lack of telephone number and lack of e-mail address on your September 12th submission. If you have any questions regarding this review, please call me at (518) 237-8643, extension 3283. Please refer to the project number (PR) above in any correspondence.

Sincerely,

James Warren
Historic Preservation
Program Analyst

Encl: "Archeology Comment"

ARCHEOLOGY COMMENTS
02PR04524

Based on reported resources, there is an archeological site in or adjacent to your project area. Therefore the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) recommends that a Phase 1 archeological survey is warranted for all portions of the project to involve ground disturbance, unless substantial prior ground disturbance can be documented. If you consider the project area to be disturbed, documentation of the disturbance will need to be reviewed by OPRHP. Examples of disturbance include mining activities and multiple episodes of building construction and demolition.

A Phase 1 survey is designed to determine the presence or absence of archeological sites or other cultural resources in the project's area of potential effect. The Phase 1 survey is divided into two progressive units of study including a Phase 1A sensitivity assessment and initial project area field inspection, and a Phase 1B subsurface testing program for the project area. The OPRHP can provide standards for conducting cultural resource investigations upon request. Cultural resource surveys and survey reports that meet these standards will be accepted and approved by the OPRHP.

Our office does not conduct cultural resources surveys. A 36 CFR 61 qualified archeologist should be retained to conduct the Phase 1 survey. Many archeological consulting firms advertise their availability in the yellow pages. The services of qualified archeologists can also be obtained by contacting local, regional, or statewide professional archeological organizations. Phase 1 surveys can be expected to vary in cost per mile of right-of-way or by the number of acres impacted. We encourage you to contact a number of consulting firms and compare examples of each firm's work to obtain the best product.

Documentation of ground disturbance should include a description of the disturbance with confirming evidence. Confirmation can include current photographs and/or older photographs of the project area which illustrate the disturbance (approximately keyed to a project area map), past maps or site plans that accurately record previous disturbances, or current soil borings that verify past disruptions to the land. Agricultural activity is not considered to be substantial ground disturbance and many sites have been identified in previously cultivated land.

If you have any questions concerning archeology, please contact MICHAEL SCHIFFERLI at 518-237-8643. ext 3281

http://sphinx/PR/PMReadForm.asp?iPrn=1&iFld=2174&sSFile=form4.htm 11/27/02

United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE
120 Laurel Street
Patchogue, New York 11772
(631) 289-4810

IN REPLY REFER TO:

November 1, 2005

N1621

Tracey M. Clothier
Senior Planner
the LA group, P C
40 Long Alley
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Dear Ms. Clothier:

This letter is in response to your request for information on the potential presence of Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species and habitat within the vicinity of the proposed construction site for the new, Fire Island National Seashore (FIIS), West-End Entrance Station to be located slightly west of the Robert Moses State Park (RMSP)/FIIS boundary line.

The piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) shorebird species was designated as a federally threatened species in 1986 under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973. Every summer, piping plovers breed and nest along the northern atlantic coast. With their breeding grounds spanning from South Carolina to Maine, certain numbers of these fascinating species find their way each year towards FIIS.

In accordance with ESA and the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) Atlantic Coast Population Recovery Plan guidelines, extraordinary efforts are implemented each year to ensure a successful productivity for each seasons young. Within the past three years, FIIS has proudly witnessed an increase in overall piping plover nest productivity. From an average of 1.8 (out of a possible 4) piping plover chicks fledged per nest site in 2003, to 2.2 in 2004, and an impressive 2.4 average in 2005.

Based on past FIIS-T&E species monitoring and data collection efforts, recent field reconnaissance site visits, and a good understanding of piping plover/suitable habitat ecology; no habitat within the project area is considered "critical habitat" in accordance with the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. Throughout the course of construction, I will conduct weekly site visits in a continuing effort to monitor the area for wildlife species.

If you require any additional information, please contact me at (631) 687-4768.

Sincerely,

Daniel Barrera, Jr.
Wildlife Biologist

NEA

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTISTS & PLANNERS

July 22, 2005

William A. Griswold, Ph.D.
Archaeologist, NPS-Northeast Region Archaeology Program
Contracting Officer's Technical Representative
4th Floor Boott Cotton Mills Museum
115 John St.
Lowell, MA 01852

Re: **End-of-Fieldwork Memorandum, Phase I Archaeological Investigation Fire Island National Seashore West End Ranger Station Project, Fire Island, New York**

Dear Dr. Griswold:

Northern Ecological Associates, Inc., Archaeological Services Group (NEA) is pleased to submit this memorandum notifying you that the fieldwork portion of the Phase I archaeological investigation for the Fire Island National Seashore (FIIS) West End Ranger Station Project (Project) was completed on July 15, 2005. Fieldwork was completed under the direction of Dr. Stuart A. Eldridge, RPA. Dr. Eldridge was assisted by Ms. Sarah Haugh, B.A., Level II archaeological field technician and Mr. Harlan Locking, B.A., Level II archaeological field technician.

A draft narrative report for this Phase I archaeological investigation will be completed and forwarded to your office within 60 days of completion of the fieldwork. The draft narrative report will present background research and previous cultural resource investigations, the physical and cultural environment of the Project area, the archaeological field methods employed, the results of the Phase I field investigation for the Project, and recommendations based on the Phase I investigation findings.

The Phase I archaeological investigation for the Project was undertaken by NEA between July 11, 2005 and July 15, 1005. The purpose of this investigation was to assess the archaeological deposits that may be disturbed during construction of a new contact station at the western end of the park and the installation of utilities to service the new contact station.

Completion of the Phase I archaeological investigation fieldwork involved sufficient stratigraphic excavation of 70 50cm x 50cm shovel test pits (STPs) distributed within the

451 Presumpscot Street • Portland, Maine 04103 • (207) 879-9496 • fax (207) 879-9481 • www.nea-enviro.com

proposed construction impact areas of the Project. The test units were, on average, excavated to a depth of 50 centimeters below present surfaces. All STPs exhibited deposits consisting of layers of unsorted fill and/or dune sand. A small sample of artifacts was collected consisting mainly of modern period plastic fragments and bottle glass fragments, and historic period iron nails or spikes, window glass fragments, and ceramics.

None of the 70 STPs excavated during the NEA Phase I archaeological investigation of the Project produced a significant sample of historic period or prehistoric artifacts or materials nor was there any indication of definable historic period or prehistoric features within any of the STPs.

On the basis of this result of the Phase I archaeological investigation of the Project, further archaeological excavations are presumably not warranted. NEA contends that Phase I archaeological investigation of the Project has demonstrated that no discernable prehistoric or historic sites or features potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places are located within the Project construction impact areas.

We appreciate the opportunity to perform this Phase I archaeological investigation of the FHS West End Ranger Station Project. Please contact me at (207) 879-9496, ext. 246 if you have questions or require more information.

Respectfully Submitted,
Northern Ecological Associates, Inc.
Archaeological Services Group

Stuart A. Eldridge, Ph.D., RPA
Principal Investigator

Cc: J. Sikoryak, COAR; NEA File No. NPS-100

NEA

OFFICE OF PARKS · RECREATION · HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE
Bernadette Castro
Commissioner

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189 518-237-8643

November 30, 2005

Michael T. Reynolds
NPS/Fire Island National Seashore
120 Laurel Street
Patchogue, New York 11772

RECEIVED
DEC 5 2005

Re: NPS
West End Ranger Station Project
Fire Island National Seashore
Islip, Suffolk County
05PR05807

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

Thank you for requesting the comments of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). We have reviewed the project in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Based upon this review, it is the SHPO's opinion that your project will have No Effect upon cultural resources in or eligible for inclusion in the National Registers of Historic Places.

If further correspondence is required regarding this project, please be sure to refer to the OPRHP Project Review (PR) number noted above.

Sincerely,

Ruth L. Pierpont
Director

RLP:bsa

cc: Steven A. Czarniecki, Fire Island
William A. Griswold, NPS

Appendix B

Statement of Findings for Floodplains and Wetlands

Statement of Findings for Floodplains and Wetlands

For the Environmental Assessment for the New West End Entrance Station
Fire Island National Seashore
Islip, New York

December 2005

RECOMMENDED:

Superintendent, Fire Island National Park Date

CERTIFICATION OF TECHNICAL ADEQUACY AND SERVICEWIDE CONSISTENCY:

Chief, Water Resources Division, National Park Service Date

APPROVED:

Regional Director, Northeast Region, National Park Service Date

Statement of Findings for Floodplains and Wetlands

For the Environmental Assessment for the New West End Entrance Station
Fire Island National Seashore
Islip, New York

November 2005

A. Introduction

The Fire Island National Park (FINS) has prepared and made available a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed New West End Entrance Station in Fire Island National Park (Park) on Long Island in New York State. Executive Orders 11988 (Floodplain Management) and 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) require that NPS and other federal agencies to evaluate the likely impact of actions in floodplains and wetlands. NPS Directive's Order #77-1:Wetland Protection and Procedure Manual #77-1 and 77-2 Floodplain Management provide NPS policies and procedures complying with E.O. 11990, and Special Directive 93-4 (Floodplain Management Guideline) provides NPS procedures for complying with E.O. 11988. This Statement of Findings (SOF) documents compliance with these NPS wetland protection and floodplain management procedures.

Description of Proposed Action

The preferred alternative (Figure 3-4 Alternative B Concept Plan) is comprised of a single new National Park Service (NPS) visitors contact station and new keypad entry gate system on property currently owned by New York State adjacent to the Park. The lands where the proposed Project Site is located between the Park Lighthouse Tract and Parking Field 5 of Robert Moses State Park (RMSP) at the eastern loop of the Robert Moses Causeway.

The project will consist of a new building not to exceed 2,000 square feet that will provide needed office space for Park personnel, an information contact station for Park visitors, and public restrooms. A total of eight (8) parking spaces will be available at the site. Four will be reserved for staff use and four for public use, including one wheelchair accessible. The building's public purpose is envisioned as an incidental use for people to purchase or check on driving permits. Public restroom use is targeted for pedestrians traveling to and from the Park beaches. Pedestrian connections have been incorporated to existing walkways from the beach and from RMSP Parking Field 5 (parking area). Residents and visitors access the Park year-round utilizing Parking Field 5. There are no wetlands located in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site.
The New West End Entrance Station is located in the Town of Islip on Fire Island just off the south shore of Long Island. As indicated in Figure 2-1, "Regional Location Map," the site is specifically located on the Fire Island Lighthouse Tract portion of the Fire

Island National Seashore lands, adjacent to and just east of the Robert Moses State Park. The present West End Entrance Station is the primary entry point to both public and private lands in the Park and is located approximately one-quarter mile east of the proposed location.

Site Description

The Project Site is approximately 50 miles east of New York City. It is accessed by car via Montauk Highway, Sunrise Highway and the Long Island Expressway. The Sagtikos State Parkway leads into the Robert Moses Causeway, which terminates on Fire Island. The site is also linked to New York City via the Long Island Railroad. The Park is flanked by RMSP on the west, and Smith Point County Park on the east. Private lands include the seventeen small hamlet communities interspersed throughout the length of the Park.

Site Floodplains

Elevations in the immediate vicinity of the project area are from 16-22 feet above sea level. Floodplain maps prepared by FEMA indicate that the majority of the site is located in the Zone VE, meaning it is an area that is typically inundated by 100-year flood events that are effected and exacerbated by wave action. The area located at the top of Entrance Triangle is indicated as being in Zone AE, meaning it is an area that is typically inundated by 100-year flood events. B Flood Elevations (BFE's) have been determined for the entire project area.

Coastal flooding does occur on Fire Island. Historically, the most wide spread damage from flooding occurred as a result of the 1938 Hurricane. The most significant storm in recent years to affect Fire Island was the December 1992 nor'easter. The Town of Islip has taken special measures to address flooding and erosion on Fire Island and regularly reviews building permits for conformance with flood regulations.

Although the building site is in the 100-year floodplain, the site is located at the highest point of elevation in the vicinity of the Park's western boundary and has no recent history of flooding.

Site Wetlands

A wetlands delineation of Park resources was completed in 1997 by a SUNY Stony Brook graduate student (Caldecutt, 1997). Wetland/upland wetland determinations were performed in accordance with the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual. Sites of high wetland concentration as identified by the USFWS National Wetland Inventory Maps and aerial photography, were investigated for the entire island. The report found that there were 19 wetland sites in the region bounded by RMSP to the hamlet of Kismet. Nine of these wetlands are located within 500 feet from the eastern edge of the Project Site. All wetlands are located in a vegetation category known as "brackish meadow" directly east of the Project Site near the boardwalk and close to the

present boundary between RMSP and the Park. Inland cranberry bogs characterize these wetland areas and the primary vegetation is twig rush and cranberry plants.

A wetland area of roughly 1.5 acres is identified in the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) and located 300 feet southwest of the site (PSS1/EM5C). An additional NWI wetland area of roughly 0.30 acre is identified approximately 600 feet from the site.

There are no water bodies or wetlands in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Project Site therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

B. Justification for Use of the Floodplain

Location Justification

There are a number of existing problems and issues that will be addressed and resolved by the proposed Project:

- The need to provide a vehicle checkpoint station which safely controls access to Park lands. The most significant problem is the lack of a safe turn-around area. Curiosity seekers drive approximately one-half mile down to the existing checkpoint and then must back up to return to the road back to RMSP. Also, the permit entry system is outdated and inefficient. Should the Reg-Neg process result in more stringent vehicle access requirements, an efficient entry gate will become an even more important traffic control factor.

- The need to protect natural resources from vehicles driving off-road.

- The need for additional office space and parking for Park staff.

- The need to provide a safe drop-off point for pedestrians.

- The need to provide additional restroom facilities.

- The need to provide an improved initial point of information contact for the visitor.

- The need to show a physical and visual boundary of where the Park begins.

Investigation of Alternative Sites

Three alternatives were considered for the placement of the new visitor contact station and entry gate. The selected alternative best balances the protection of natural resources, historic viewsheds, and site lines of the existing raptor-viewing platform with the need for improved public visibility, additional physical space, secure, safe vehicle access to Park lands, safe efficient ingress/egress from RMSP to the Park, and retention of good vehicle circulation for vehicles leaving RMSP.

Alternative A, the "no action" alternative assumes that the present gate facility remains at its existing location. The location of the existing facility is shown as Figure 2-3 in the EA. No change in the gate entry system means that the present problems with traffic and gate operation will continue and accelerate with anticipated increases in traffic levels in and around the site due to annual increases in visitor levels. The existing gate entry system cannot safely accommodate new levels of traffic nor ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists along Burma Road. There are no flooding or wetlands issues present at this location.

Alternatives C and D, conceptualize the building in several other areas of the Entrance Triangle with various parking configurations. Parking and the lack of a safe drop-off zone for pedestrians on their way to the beaches and private residences inside the Park kept these alternatives from being selected. There were no wetland or flooding issues relating to either of these alternatives.

Alternative sites on federal land were considered but rejected. The purposes of the project require placing the proposed entrance station at or near the Park boundary which is entirely in the floodplain. Placing the entrance station on park lands along the park boundary would require substantial impacts to undisturbed areas of high value, including wetlands and dunes. The only sites near the park boundary that would avoid these undisturbed areas are on state land.

Under NPS policy, the alternative analyzed that would be most beneficial for the environment or have the least adverse impacts should be identified. Of these alternatives selected, the Preferred Alternative is also the environmentally preferred alternative. Table 6-1, "Summary of Potential Impacts," illustrates the levels of impacts and identifies positive impacts between the individual alternatives. Clearly, the Preferred Alternative offers the greatest benefit with the least environmental effect.

C. Description of Site-Specific Flood Risk

Flood Recurrence

Coastal flooding occurs on Fire Island. Historically, the most wide spread damage from flooding occurred as a result of the 1938 Hurricane. No information about flooding at the Project Site is available from records. The most significant storm in recent years to affect Fire Island was the December 1992 nor'easter. According to NPS staff, flooding did not then nor did it ever impact the Entrance Triangle site. This area was built up with fill to accommodate the turnaround of the Causeway and is high enough to avoid even the worst flood events.

Hydraulics

Flooding does not occur at the Project Site.

Time required for Flooding

The Project Site represents an area with one of the highest elevations on Fire Island. There would be ample time to prepare for a flood event.

Opportunity for Evacuation

In the event of flooding, the Project Site has direct access to the Causeway, the main exit off Fire Island.

Geomorphic Considerations

There are no significant geomorphic considerations since this flood zone is located well away from Great South Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

D. Description and Explanation of Flood Mitigation Plans

Flood Mitigation Plans

The project was sited to take advantage of the highest available elevations to minimize any future problems with flooding. The proposed building will be constructed according to local, state and federal regulations for buildings to be located in 100-year floodplains.

The project is also sited away from low-lying vegetation that is occasionally under water, depending on the season. Careful consideration was given to keeping the building sited in the existing disturbed area thereby preserving all nearby native vegetation. Best management practices will be initiated during the construction of the building and site work. Stormwater will be managed on-site.

Consistence and Compliance

The Federal laws, Executive Orders and regulations, along with associated state and local regulations, that must be fulfilled before the project may be implemented are summarized below**.**

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
This EA assesses impacts and proposals pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires that Federal agencies assess their proposals for a full range of impacts on the natural and cultural environments, and that alternatives are provided and analyzed to decide whether the preferred alternative could have a significant effect on the human environment. This document is to be released for public and agency review for 30 days, after which the National Park Service would decide if the proposed actions are significant enough to require a preparation of an environmental impact statement (ElS). If so, a notice of intent to prepare an ElS would be prepared and announced in the Federal Register If no ElS is required, the Regional Director may sign a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSl), which concludes NEPA compliance for this plan and clears it for funding and implementation.

Endangered Species Act
Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act requires the National Park Service to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out does not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or critical habitat. The Service has been consulted concerning the presence of listed species and critical habitat.

The New York State Environmental Conservation Law contains definitions for NYS Threatened, Endangered, Special Concern Species, and Protected Species. Native plant life is further protected under 6 NYCRR Part 193.3, which defines the number of plants to be found on sites on the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) 7 1/2 minute series maps, or listed Federally, It also defines the term "colony" for plant species. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation administers the state's non-game and endangered (animal and plant) species program. The department has been consulted concerning endangered or threatened species and critical habitats.

Cultural Resources Compliance
The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, is the cornerstone of Federal historic preservation law. It established a national policy of historic preservation that provides for identification and protection of historic and archeological resources.

Section 1 10 of the act requires that government agencies carry out their programs in accordance with, and in furtherance of, national historic preservation policy and that such agencies identify and preserve historic properties under their ownership or control.

Section 106 of the act requires that government agencies take into account the effects of their actions on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on those actions.

At Fire Island National Seashore all potential shoreside cultural sites are evaluated for the potential eligibility of structures or sites for the National Register of Historic Places (Section 110). No activities in the preferred alternative will have an impact on cultural structures or sites.

Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, Floodplain Management and Wetland Protection
These executive orders direct NPS to avoid, to the extent possible, the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with modifying or occupying floodplains and wetlands. They also require NPS to avoid direct or indirect support of floodplains or wetland development whenever there is a practical alternative. A statement of findings must be filed with the finding of no significant impact (FONSI) or the record of decision (ROD).

Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended (CWA) (33 USC 1251-1387)
The US EPA has the responsibility for oversight and review of permits and actions that affect waters of the US. The USCOE is charged with evaluating federal actions that result in potential degradation of waters of the US and issuing permits for actions consistent with the CWA. Since no placement of fill will take place for the project, no Section 404 Permit from the USACOE.

Construction activities that commence on or after March 10, 2003 and disturb one or more acres of land must obtain coverage under the new Phase II Permit Requirements. A SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity (GP-02-01) or an individual permit for all stormwater discharges would be required. The Project Site is less than one acre and, therefore, does not qualify to meet this standard.
The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System has basically the same set of standards. The project will not discharge to surface waters and the site is less than one acre making it ineligible for a permit.

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972
New York has an approved Coastal Management Program. As such, any Federal agency directly undertaking a development project in the coastal zone must insure that the project is, to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the enforceable policies of approved management programs. However, Federal actions are considered under the Federal Consistency provision only. Federal consistency provides Federal agencies with an effective mechanism to document coastal effects and to address State coastal management concerns. Moreover, compliance with the consistency requirement complements National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. Even though the CZMA effects test is different than NEPA's and the CZMA requires Federal agencies to alter projects to be consistent with State CMP policies, Federal Consistency will be completed regardless of the alternative ultimately selected for this project.

State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)
NEPA requires that an Environmental Assessment (EA) be prepared when a proposal may have a measurable impact on the environment. If the completed EA shows that the proposal may have a significant effect, an EIS is also required. In order to be also consistent with the NYS SEQRA regulations, a Short Environmental Assessment Form will be completed for the preferred alternative.

Suffolk County Permits
A 404B Individual Septic System Permit from Suffolk County Department of Health will be required prior to construction of the on-site sewage disposal system.

ADA Compliance
The Project will comply with the 2002 Federal Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities.

E. Summary

With the above mitigation measures in place, NPS determines that the natural floodplain values would be protected and potentially hazardous conditions associated with flood events would be minimized. The NPS finds that this proposed action is consistent with the policies and procedures of NPS Special Directive 93-4, Floodplain Management Guidelines, Director's Order #77-1: Wetland Protection, including the "no net loss of wetlands" policy.

References

Fire Island National Seashore, Environmental Assessment for Endangered Species Habitat Management, 2003. National Park Service. 39 pp.

Fire Island National Seashore, General Management Plan, 1978. National Park Service. 147 pp.

Freshwater Wetlands Delineation and Inventory of Wetland Herpetological Species on Fire Island National Seashore, 1997, Caldecutt, William J.5 pp.

Restoration and Protection of Fire Island, 1938. Long Island State Park Commission.